# ART OF THE SAMURAI

## JAPANESE ARMS AND ARMOR, 1156–1868

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## JAPANESE ARMS AND ARMOR, 1156–1868

Edited by Morihiro Ogawa

*With contributions from Kazutoshi Harada, Hiroshi Ikeda, Tetsuo Ito, Ayako Kobayashi, Masato Misumi, Takamasa Saito, Taeko Watanabe*

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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# DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

It is with immense gratitude to our colleagues at the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Government of Japan and the Tokyo National Museum that we mark the opening of "Art of the Samurai: Japanese Arms and Armor, 1156–1868," the first exhibition and catalogue to explore so deeply from both a historical and artistic perspective the armor, weapons, and accoutrements of the samurai. Although there are a number of important collections of Japanese arms and armor in the West, the most important examples in terms of quality, craftsmanship, condition, and rarity are to be found in Japan, scattered among various national and regional museums, temples, shrines, and in private hands. We are therefore especially indebted to the more than sixty lenders who have so generously enabled us to assemble here for the first time such a broad selection of the very finest surviving examples—incontestable masterpieces in lacquer, steel, and silk that form a unique testament to the refined martial aesthetic of samurai culture.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is a particularly appropriate host for this exhibition in that our encyclopedic holdings include the most comprehensive collection of Japanese arms and armor outside of Japan. This is thanks in large part to the Museum's first curator of arms and armor, Dr. Bashford Dean (1867–1928), who during extended stays in Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries personally assembled two collections of objects that became part of the Museum's permanent collection in 1904 and 1914. Dean, who maintained an active correspondence with a wide range of Japanese curators, collectors, and connoisseurs, also instituted the practice of hosting Japanese scholars and specialists to assist in the study of the Museum's collection, including Noritake Tsuda and Asako Matsuoka, among others. Reviving that tradition in the 1970s, Dr. Helmut Nickel, then curator of arms and armor, invited Ogawa Morihiro, one of the world's leading specialists in this field, to study and catalogue the Metropolitan's collection. Mr. Ogawa has now been affiliated with the Museum for more than thirty years and serves as special consultant for Japanese arms and armor.

The present exhibition, which was conceived and organized by Mr. Ogawa, is the result of more than ten years of intensive research and planning. In addition to the cooperation and unflagging assistance of our colleagues at the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Tokyo National Museum, this momentous venture would not have been possible without the generous assistance of several individuals and institutions. We are especially pleased to acknowledge The Yomiuri Shimbun for its notable corporate sponsorship. Our utmost gratitude is also due to The Jessica E. Smith and Kevin R. Brine Charitable Trust, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New York, Inc., the Oceanic Heritage Foundation, Japan Airlines, and the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities for their contributions to the exhibition. For making possible the publication of this catalogue, we are most thankful for the support of The Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, Inc., as well as Arthur Ochs Sulzberger and Allison S. Cowles, the Grancsay Fund, and the Doris Duke Fund for Publications.

Thomas P. Campbell
*Director*
*The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

# COMMISSIONER'S STATEMENT

Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is pleased to present this exhibition of more than 200 outstanding works of traditional Japanese weaponry and armor, including 34 officially designated National Treasures and 64 Important Cultural Properties.

Each year the Agency for Cultural Affairs participates in overseas exhibitions of representative cultural properties from Japan in order to improve understanding of Japanese history and culture and to deepen ties of international friendship by introducing Japanese culture to people around the world. Past exhibitions jointly organized with the Metropolitan Museum, an institution that not only is representative of the United States but is also one of the outstanding museums of the world, include "Traveling Exhibition of Classical Art of Japan in the USA" in 1953 and "Momoyama: Japanese Art in the Age of Grandeur" in 1975.

The focus of the present exhibition—Japanese swords and armor—are unique works of art, developed based on a combination of practicality and aesthetic refinement. Other representative works include superb examples of lacquerware, from saddles and stirrups to sword racks and cases; textiles, such as *jinbaori* surcoats; and portraits, decorative screens, and scrolls, many depicting scenes of battle. This marks the first time that an overseas exhibition has offered such a comprehensive look at the world of the samurai, including a record number of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties: an overall introduction to samurai culture that would be difficult to match even in Japan.

We hope that this exhibition will be an opportunity for the people of the United States to deepen their knowledge of Japanese culture and that it will further enrich the cultural dialogue between both countries. In conclusion, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all of the people whose efforts contributed to the organization of this exhibition.

Hideo Tamai
*Commissioner*
*Agency for Cultural Affairs*
*Japan*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition and its accompanying catalogue are the results of more than ten years of careful planning. The successful completion of this unprecedented endeavor would not have been possible without the help of many colleagues in Japan and the United States.

First, I should like to express my deepest respect for the Japanese artists who produced so many extraordinary works and to the people of Japan, who over the centuries so carefully preserved these treasures for future generations. I am especially indebted to those responsible for the administration of cultural properties, the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunkacho) and the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, both in Tokyo. Formal discussions with The Metropolitan Museum of Art regarding the exhibition were initiated by Suzuki Norio, director of the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, at a time when he was director of the Fine Arts Department of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. These discussions were continued by his successors, Yuyama Kenji, now director of Nara National Museum, and Kurihara Yuji, present director of the Fine Arts Department of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, all of whom contributed very important and constructive ideas. During that time, Saito Takamasa, chief researcher on applied arts, Cultural Properties Division, Agency for Cultural Affairs, provided critical support, and Harada Kazutoshi and Ikeda Hiroshi, both senior researchers, contributed their immense knowledge and expertise to ensure an extraordinarily high level of content in the present exhibition. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Saito for his unfailing and generous support throughout the evolution of this project, which would not have been possible without his invaluable contributions.

The paintings, ceramics, lacquerware, Tea Ceremony implements, textiles, and other exquisite works that most people associate with Japanese art were considered *oku dogu*, or "interior equipment": objects enjoyed by samurai and used as diversions in the course of everyday life. In contrast, military equipment, particularly swords and armor, were known as *omote dogu*, or "external equipment." These objects, commissioned by samurai to protect themselves as well as their subjects and domains, were prized above all else, part of a splendid display but also the dress they would die in if defeated in battle. To that end, samurai spent untold sums, and went to almost any extreme, in pursuit of excellence and splendor in the making of these great works of art. This exhibition is a unique opportunity to witness for the first time the emergence and development of this "exterior equipment" together with paintings and other related materials, including an impressive total of 34 National Treasures, 64 Important Cultural Properties, and 6 Important Art Objects: an assemblage, as has been noted, that it would be difficult to experience even in Japan. I wish to express my profound gratitude to the people of Japan, the Japanese government, and the many private lenders who have so generously given permission for the inclusion of their property in this exhibition.

Between 1998 and 2006, 135 objects from the collection of Japanese arms and armor in The Metropolitan Museum of Art were sent to Japan for conservation and repair, with the kind cooperation of the Japanese government. The last room of the present exhibition presents a photographic record of this important undertaking, and I am indebted to all involved. I also wish to thank my fellow contributors to the catalogue, whose expertise has helped make this important volume a resource for scholars for many years to come: Saito Takamasa, Ito Tetsuo, Kobayashi Ayako, Harada Kazutoshi, Ikeda Hiroshi, Watanabe Taeko, and Misumi Masato. I should also like to thank my wife, Sumiko, who typed all of my manuscripts, and Victor Harris, keeper emeritus of Japanese antiquities, British Museum, London, who undertook the enormous task of translating all of the texts.

Many colleagues at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, were supportive of this exhibition from the start and have worked extraordinarily hard to bring it to fruition. I am particularly grateful to the Museum's administration, especially Thomas P. Cambell, director, and his predecessor, Philippe de Montebello, as well as to Mahrukh Tarapor, Martha Deese, and Doralynn Pines. The Editorial Department, under the leadership of John P. O'Neill, produced this splendid catalogue, and I wish to express my gratitude to my editor, Dale Tucker, whose patience and skill improved every page, Peter Antony and Salvatore Destro, who managed the complex production, Bruce Campbell, who conceived the elegant design, and Robert Weisberg, who coordinated typesetting. Additional invaluable assistance was provided by Margaret Rennolds Chace, Ellyn Childs Allison, Margaret Donovan, Harriet Whelchel, Jane Tai, Anjali Pala, and Alex Manevitz. In the Design

Department, under the leadership of Linda Sylling, I wish to thank Dan Kershaw and Sophia Geronimus for the wonderful exhibition design and graphics, respectively. Herb Moskowitz, Nina Maruca, and Aileen Chuk in the Office of the Registrar provided essential and generous support, as did Lawrence Becker, Donna Strahan, and Hiroko Kariya in Objects Conservation; Nina Diefenbach, Andrea Kann, and Katie Holden in the Development Office; Kirstie Howard of the Counsel's Office; Phil Venturino and Taylor Miller of Facilities Management and Buildings, respectively; and Judith Smith, Sinead Kehoe, Shi-yee Liu, and Selena Shen Wang in Asian Art. To my colleagues in the Department of Arms and Armor I wish to convey my profound thanks, especially to Stuart Pyhrr, Dirk Breiding, Hermes Knauer, Edward Hunter, Steve Bluto, Marilynn Van Dunk, and Danielle Watson. Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my friend and colleague Donald J. LaRocca, whose guidance and hard work helped make this exhibition and catalogue a reality.

Ogawa Morihiro

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| MM | Misumi Masato |
| OM | Ogawa Morihiro |
| ST | Saito Takamasa |
| WT | Watanabe Taeko |

# CHRONOLOGY

The dates of Japanese historical periods can differ according to scholarly opinion and, in some cases, in relation to subject matter. In general, and unless otherwise noted, references to historical periods in this catalogue refer the following date ranges:

Jōmon period (ca. 12,500 B.C.–ca. 4th or 3rd century B.C.)
Yayoi period (ca. 4th or 3rd century B.C.–ca. 3rd century A.D.)
Kofun period (ca. 3rd–7th century A.D.)
Asuka period (late 6th century A.D.–710)
Nara period (710–794)
Heian period (794–1185)
Kamakura period (1185–1333)
Nanbokuchō period (1333/36–92)
Muromachi period (1392–1573)
Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573–1615)
Edo period (1615–1868)
Meiji era (1868–1912)

# NOTE TO THE READER

With the exception of certain sections of the frontmatter, Japanese personal names appear in traditional order, with family name followed by given name: for example, Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Dimensions are provided in centimeters, followed by inches in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, height precedes width precedes depth (or length). With a single noted exception, blade lengths do not include the tang and refer to the *nagasa* or *hachō*: a measurement based on an imaginary straight line drawn between the point and the *mune-machi*, the notch at the back of the blade at the top of the tang.

Japanese terms that have entered the English language (e.g., shogun) are not italicized. For the sake of the general reader, the specialized names, descriptions, and technical terms related to Japanese arms and armor are defined repeatedly throughout the essays and entries. Where terms are not defined in the text, they can often be found in the glossary. For a more exhaustive treatment of this vast lexicon, interested readers should consult specialist glossaries such as that published in conjunction with the 1984 volume *Japanese Swords and Sword Furniture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, by Ogawa Morihiro.

# ART
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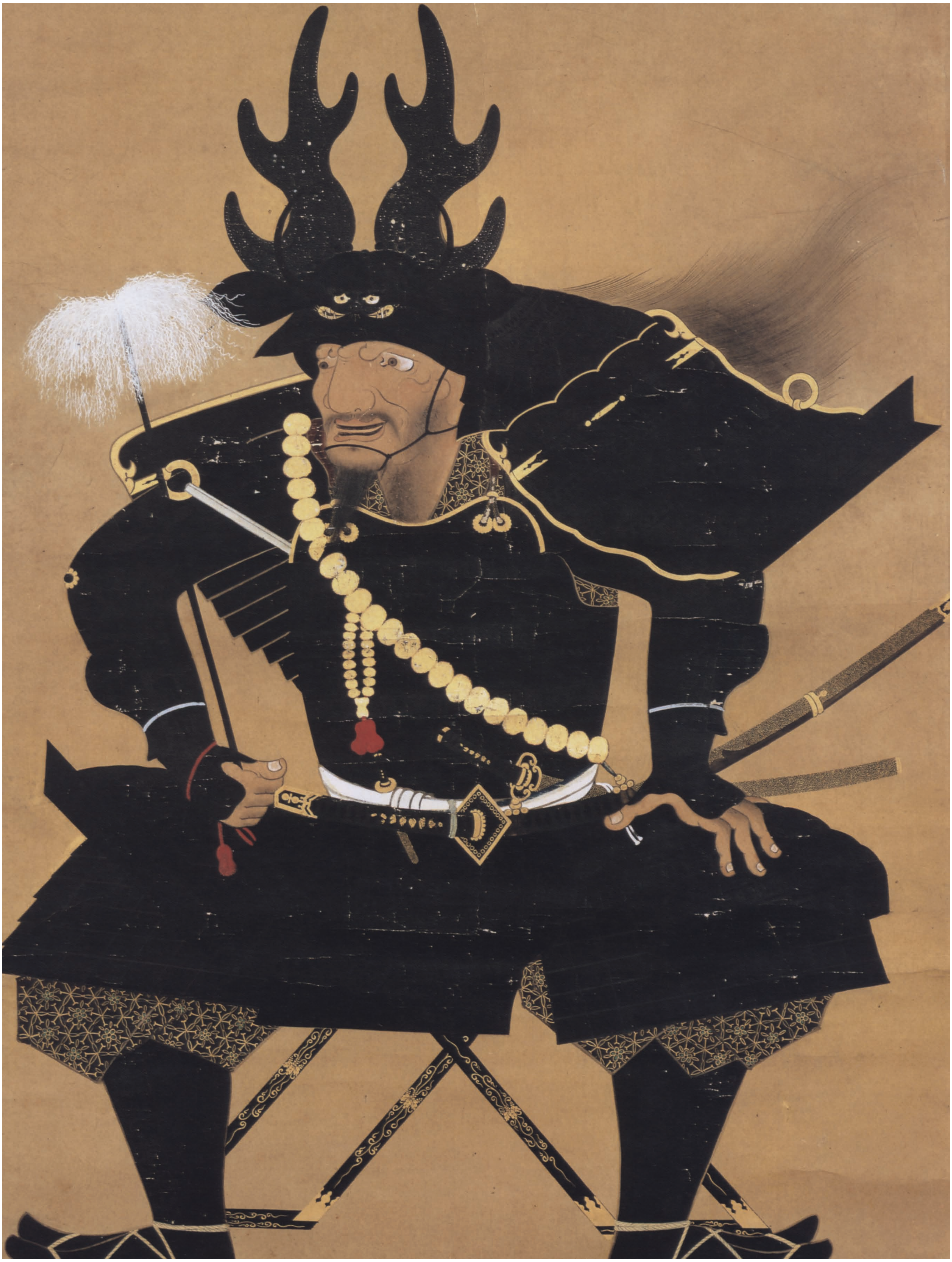


OGAWA MORIHIRO

# THE SPIRIT OF THE SAMURAI

## I. ARCHAEOLOGY AND PREHISTORY

For more than two million years, humans have improved their lives by making sharp implements that could be used for cutting. In 1819 Danish scholar Christian Jürgensen Thomson (1788–1865) divided human culture into three stages based on the materials used to make those implements: stone, bronze, and iron. Following is a brief discussion of those three periods in Japanese history within the context of the social background, insofar as archaeologists have been able to determine it.

### THE STONE AGE: PALEOLITHIC TO NEOLITHIC

The easiest way to craft sharp weapons and tools from stone is to break up rocks by striking them together. The sharp fragments can be used as knives or awls; larger pieces can be tied to the end of a stick to make a spear or ax. Stone implements produced in this way are known as percussion tools. In the course of time, it becomes clear to toolmakers that sharper and more efficient blades can be made by polishing out the irregularities in the surface of the stone, and in most societies polished tools eventually replaced or supplemented percussion tools. In 1865 John Lubbock (1834–1913) proposed dividing the Stone Age into early (Paleolithic), middle (Mesolithic), and late (Neolithic) phases, based in part on increasingly sophisticated tool technologies.

*The Jōmon period.* Japan's Paleolithic period began in all probability about 35,000 B.C. Percussion tools and implements of bone and horn were made, but the manufacture of pottery and animal husbandry were unknown. Accordingly, people depended on hunting, fishing, and gathering for their livelihood. In Europe the period of transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic was characterized by the domestication of the dog and by the addition of bow and arrows and small blades, or microliths, to the Paleolithic tool kit; the way of life, however, remained that of hunter-gatherers. The early Jōmon culture in Japan has elements in common with this European Mesolithic culture but also with more sedentary Neolithic cultures around the world, which are distinguished by the use of polished stone implements, the manufacture of pottery, and the practice of agriculture and animal husbandry.

The dating of the Jōmon period is not firmly established, although it is believed to have begun about 12,500 B.C. and continued to about the third or fourth century B.C. Percussion stone tools and microliths were gradually replaced by polished stone tools (*masei sekki*). Jōmon pottery was formed by building up coils of clay by hand; the walls of such vessels are thick, and the firing temperature used to make them was low. Jōmon ware is light brown in color, and some pieces were decorated with complex designs made by pressing cord into the clay before firing or by using tools made of shell or bamboo. The literal meaning of Jōmon, "cord patterned," was a description first bestowed by an American biologist, Edward S. Morse (1838–1925), to the pottery he discovered in 1877 during his excavation of the Ōmori shell mound in Tokyo. The main types of weapons used during the Jōmon period were stone spears, axes, clubs, and swords. Bows and arrows of wood have also been excavated from Jōmon sites, together with a great number of stone arrowheads. It is thought that these tools were not designed only as weapons of war but were principally used for hunting animals, an important source of food. Possibly bronze implements were introduced into Japan by the late Jōmon period.

In 1992 an investigation of the Sannai Maruyama site at Aomori City, in northern Honshū, revealed several large settlements in an area measuring about 350,000 square meters were in continuous habitation for about 1,500 years, from the early to middle Jōmon period (ca. 3500–2000 B.C.). Pottery and stone implements excavated there filled 40,000 cardboard boxes, and from these and other finds it has been possible to deduce the lifestyle of the people who lived at Sannai Maruyama. We know that chestnuts were an important foodstuff, for example, and that the inhabitants cultivated beans and gourds and made wine using fruits such as elderberries. The structures identified at the site

*Opposite*: Fig. 1.1. *Honda Tadakatsu*, Edo period, 17th century (cat. no. 11) include 580 pit dwellings (*tate-ana*), one measuring 32 meters (105 feet) in length; 100 buildings with a raised floor; and the remains of what is thought to have been a storehouse, formed of six posts of chestnut wood, each 1 meter (ca. 3 feet) in diameter. In addition to pottery, excavators found large red-lacquered wooden bowls, baskets made of woven plant fiber, and many stone implements, including spearheads, knives, stone axes, and arrowheads. Arrowheads made of two different types of obsidian were found—one that must have been imported from present-day Nagano Prefecture and the other from Hokkaidō. Natural asphalt thought to have been obtained at nearby Lake Hachirōgata, in Akita Prefecture, was used to glue arrowheads to arrow shafts. Quantities of large beads and similar items of amber and jade were found—the amber brought from Kuji in Iwate Prefecture and the jade probably from Itoigawa in Niigata Prefecture, although possibly by sea from Siberia. The presence of raw materials and unfinished products shows clearly that the site was a large-scale production center for jewelry, arrowheads, and articles made of jade, amber, and other materials. From all this—and from the presence on-site of dugout canoes—we can deduce that Sannai Maruyama was part of a trading network extending more than one hundred miles by sea, contravening the hitherto accepted view of the Jōmon as a primitive people who wandered from place to place hunting and gathering for their livelihood.

Since the discovery and investigation of Sannai Maruyama, a number of older communities have been discovered in Hokkaidō, several parts of Honshū, and southern Kyūshū, showing that the Jōmon people flourished throughout Japan and that theirs was a rich and multifaceted culture. In recent years, the remains of paddy fields and irrigation channels have been discovered at Itatzuke in Fukuoka Prefecture and Nabatake in Saga Prefecture, proving that rice agriculture was being seriously practiced in the Final Jōmon period, possibly as long ago as 1000 B.C. It is hoped that future archaeological excavations will help to further clarify this matter.

## THE BRONZE AGE

Implements made of bronze, an alloy of tin and copper that is harder than pure copper, were first made in western Asia about 3000 B.C. and then became widely used in the great civilizations that arose in the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, Indus, and Yellow river valleys. In large part because relatively few bronze implements have been excavated to date in Japan, scholars have long believed that there was never a true Bronze Age in Japan, and that bronze and iron implements were introduced there about 300 B.C. from China, where there had been a flourishing bronze culture since about 1,500 B.C., and where iron technology was introduced about 600 B.C.

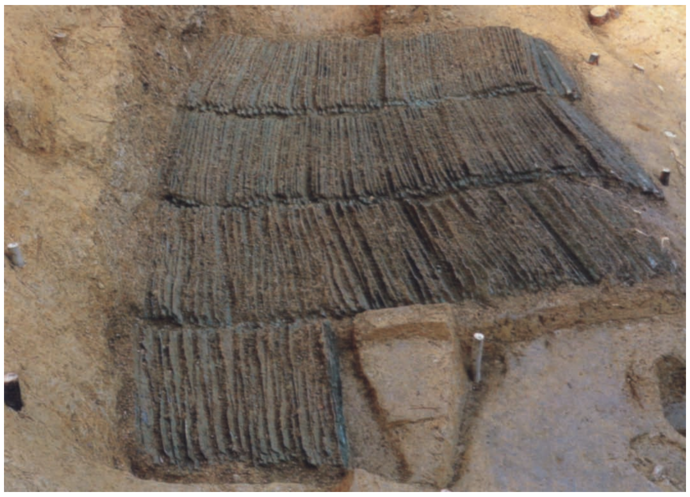


Fig. 1.2. Deposit of *dōken* (bronze swords) discovered in 1984 at the Kōjindani site, Hikawa-chō, Shimane Prefecture

In 1984 a deposit of 358 bronze swords, more than the total number (about 300) excavated in all of Japan up to that time, was discovered at the Kōjindani site in Hikawa-chō, in present-day Shimane Prefecture (fig. 1.2). Subsequently, a group of 6 ***dōtaku*** (ceremonial bells), 16 ***dōhoko*** (lance heads), and a cache of ***dōken*** (swords) came to light nearby: the first ever found together in one place (fig. 1.3). Molds for casting such pieces have also been found in Otami (Fukuoka Prefecture) and Yasunagata (Saga Prefecture), in north Kyūshū. These discoveries, which came as a great surprise to specialists in Japanese Bronze Age studies, have suggested new avenues for speculation and research. For example, perhaps the reason why so few bronze implements have been excavated is that for political or religious reasons they were buried in large numbers deep in the ground in each region of Japan, in deposits such as the one at Kōjindani. Overly large and flat bronze swords and spearheads that clearly had no practical use have been excavated at sites in Kyūshū and the region around the Inland Sea. It is not impossible that they were treasures for ritual use signifying the authority of the great clans. It has also been proposed that they and the mirrors, bells, and staff weapons were made from the metal of earlier bronze swords and spears that had been outdated as practical weapons by harder iron swords and spears and thus were melted down.

It is difficult to imagine that the immigrants who brought bronze weapons to Japan did not also carry with them a few of the bronze household objects they found most useful, such as dishes, jars, and cooking vessels. At present, however, the majority of bronze implements

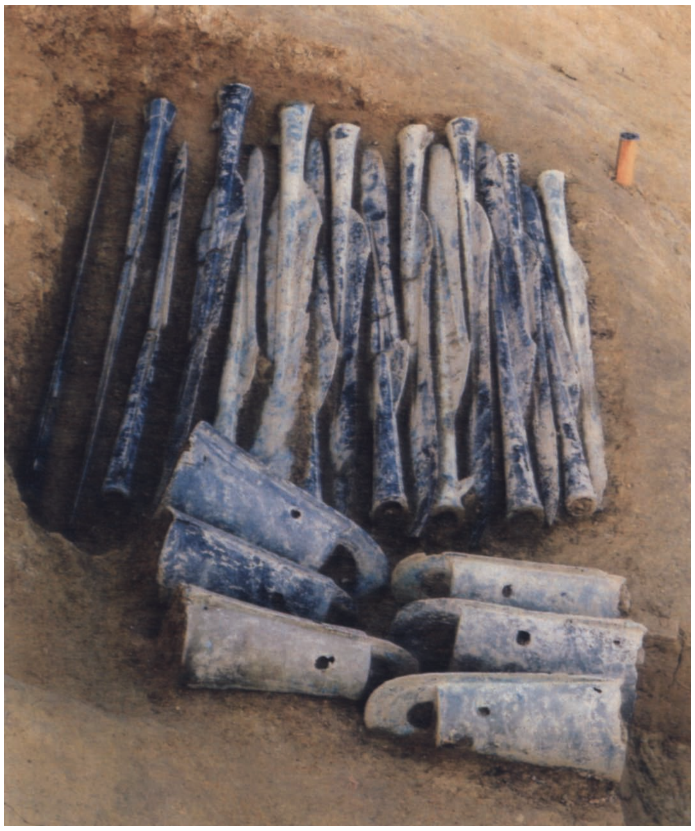


Fig. 1.3. Deposit of *dōtaku* (ceremonial bells) and *dōhoko* (lance heads) discovered in 1984 at the Kōjindani site, Hikawa-chō, Shimane Prefecture

excavated in Japan comprises weapons, mirrors, and ritual bells. There are a few objects thought to be plows as well as comma-shaped objects of unknown use but virtually no domestic utensils. Also notable in their scarcity are human and animal figurines, which were made in large numbers by the great Bronze Age civilizations. Although bronze (and iron) implements were probably highly valued and were no doubt difficult to obtain, we must investigate the possibility that such implements existed in quantity in Japan and were melted down in order to make the weapons necessary for defense of the individual and the village community.

A similar step taken much later in Japanese history comes to mind. In August 1941 the Japanese government enacted a law requiring that metal objects in private hands be turned over to the military. Commandeered first was scrap recovered from light industries that had fallen idle because of a reduction in domestic demand, but as the Pacific war progressed, objects of daily use—from manhole covers, radiators, pots, and pans to jewelry made of precious metals and even temple bells—were collected and used to make artillery shells, battleships, and aircraft. The population suffered much hardship from this; even firefighters' helmets were eventually made of bamboo.

Without question, rulers from all periods of human history have demonstrated a determination to wage war in order to expand or defend their territory. Weapons are always at the forefront of technology—essential equipment for guarding the populace, guarding oneself, and guarding the country—and historically one of the most important duties of a ruler has been to obtain the latest weapons. It is all the more interesting, then, to consider the hiatus of about 1200 years between the flourishing of the bronze culture in China (which had such close ties to Japan) in 1500 B.C. and 300 B.C., the date that bronze and iron implements are traditionally held to have arrived in Japan. We must consider the possibility that bronze technology was introduced much earlier in Japan, either through trade or by invaders using the new weapons.

### The Iron Age

The Iron Age, the third and last stage in Thomson's tripartite classification of prehistoric societies, was characterized by the smelting of iron to make tools, weapons, and military equipment, which probably began in Anatolia after 2000 B.C. and spread eastward, arriving in Japan about the third century B.C.

*The Yayoi period.* Pottery differing from Jōmon ware—wheel-thrown, rounded vessels with thin walls, fired at a high temperature, and with simple decorations unlike the corded patterns of Jōmon pottery—was first discovered in 1884 on the grounds of Tokyo University at Yayoi-chō in Hongo, Tokyo, and was named Yayoi. The age in which Yayoi pottery was used is known as the Yayoi period, which continued from about the third or fourth century B.C. (and possibly earlier) until about the third century A.D. Rice farming, which had arrived in northern Kyūshū at the end of the Jōmon period, quickly spread across Japan during the Yayoi period, and the uncertain livelihood afforded by hunting, fishing, gathering, and a little farming changed to a stable way of life supported by full-scale agriculture.

Rice farming and the culture based on it originated in the monsoon lands of Southeast Asia and spread to Japan via China. It is also thought that many people migrated toward southern Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula in order to escape the warfare of the late Eastern Zhou and the Warring States period, and that their metallurgical culture diffused toward Japan together with rice cultivation and other forms of agriculture.

Until the early Yayoi period, agricultural tools were made of wood and stone, although a few bronze hoes that may have been used to till fields have been discovered, as have some iron implements. In Japan, this Chalcolithic age—the period when stone was still being used while tools were being made of pure copper or bronze—is known as the *Kinseki heiyō-jidai*. By the late Yayoi period most farming tools were of iron, however, and agricultural production increased remarkably. Wealth accumulated in the hands of certain individuals and families, resulting in a new distinction between rich and poor. Those who ruled the *uji* (clans) and acted as their clan's religious leader and the richer and more important clan members formed a small ruling class. The first "kings" arose from among them, and the first primitive kingdoms came into being. There may be evidence for this at Yayoi burial sites: grave goods found with bodies interred in a single or double ***kamekan*** (ceramic jar) or ***hakoshiki sekkan*** (a cist or box-type stone coffin) include in many cases *dōkyō* (bronze mirrors), *dōhoko* (staff weapons), *dōken* (swords), and *dōtaku* (ceremonial bells), items scholars believe symbolized the authority of the early kings and aristocracy.

The Yayoi people lived in large villages of pit dwellings (*tateana shiki jūkyō*) in lowlands suitable for wet-rice cultivation. A smaller number of structures in the villages were raised on pillars, with the floors considerably higher than ground level. They may have been granaries, designed to keep food stocks free from damp and rats, or possibly the dwellings of the upper classes. As the accumulation of wealth progressed, social differentiation became more complex, and the organization of Japanese society began to develop from that of *buraku* (village economies) to that of states.

## II. RISE OF THE YAMATO COURT

Although no indigenous accounts of life in third-century Japan exist, early Chinese records contain some interesting, though fragmentary, information. Recorded in the *Wei zhi Woren zhuan* (Japanese: *Gishi Wajin Den*) portion of the third-century *Sanguo zhi*, or "Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms" (Japanese: *Sangoku-shi*) is that in Japan "halberds, shields, and wooden bows with bamboo arrows and arrowheads of either iron or bone are used for weapons." This statement is confirmed by the presence of iron arrowheads, knives, and swords at Yayoi-period sites. Furthermore, in the *Bian Chen* (Japanese: *Benshin*) portion of the *Wei zhi Han zhuan* (Japanese: *Gishi Kanden*), it is written that "the people of Wa [Japan] come to our country for iron," confirming that in the third century the *wajin* (Japanese) had such a strong interest in iron that they went to the Korean Peninsula to obtain it from sources there. As iron grew more plentiful in Japan, the possession of up-to-date weapons became an increasingly important factor in the struggles among rulers for dominance.

By the fifth century, the kings of Yamato, centered in the Kinai region in modern Nara Prefecture, exercised authority from northern Kyūshū through central Honshū; however, we know little about the early stages of the process of the unification of Japan. The oldest Japanese historical documents—the *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan)—were compiled in the eighth century, and many of the events that took place before the fifth century and are recorded in them are not well understood. They can be supplemented, however, by again referring to the Chinese historical sources.

In the *Dili zhi* (Japanese: *Chirishi*), the geographic section of the *Han shu* (Japanese: *Kanjo*), a history of the early Han Dynasty written by Ban Gu in the second half of the first century A.D., it is recorded that the "men of Wa [Japan], a place of more than one hundred countries, come regularly to Lelang," an official Chinese outpost in northwest Korea. From this we can conclude that Japanese people must have visited the Korean Peninsula even earlier, probably to obtain iron, and that in the middle Yayoi period Japan was divided into many kingdoms. In the fifth-century *Hou Han shu* (Later Han Record; Japanese: *Gokanjo*), the Chinese historian Fan Ye states that in the second year of the Chung Yüan era (A.D. 57), Na, a kingdom near Hakata in northern Kyūshū, sent envoys to the Han court with a tribute, and that Emperor Guangwu-di presented them with a seal. This account was confirmed in 1784, when a gold seal with the incised inscription "The King of Na in Wa under the Han Dynasty" was found at Shiga Island in Hakata Bay.

According to the *Gishi Kanden*, there was a long period of continuous warfare during the latter half of the second century in Japan, which consisted of only about thirty kingdoms by that time, until a queen named Himiko became the ruler of Yamatai and brought an end to the strife. Apparently Himiko sent a delegation to the Wei emperor of China (Wei was one of three kingdoms that succeeded the Han dynasty in 220) and in return received the title "Queen of Wa, Friend of Wei." Furthermore, in the third year of the Jingchu era (A.D. 239), the queen of Wa sent tribute to the Wei and received in return a gift of silk, bronze, mirrors, and two swords. From these accounts, we may infer that the unification of the Japanese nation had made significant progress by the beginning of the third century.

During the third and fourth centuries, the Yamato court consolidated its control over much of the Japanese archipelago. The ***Woguo zhuan*** (Japanese: ***Wa Koku Den***) section of the *Song shu* (Japanese: *Sojo*), a history of the Chinese Liu Song Dynasty compiled at the end of the fifth century, mentions a letter sent by the king of Wa (possibly Yūryaku, r. 418–79?) to the Chinese emperor, in which it is said that the first great kings (emperors) of Japan raised armies and conquered many kingdoms, including those of the Ezo, who lived in the east, and the Kumaso, Hayato, and others who lived in the west, as well as "ninety-five countries across the north sea," which may be construed as a reference to military activity by the Yamato court on the Korean Peninsula.

*The Yamato court and the Korean states.* The last dynasty of ancient imperial China, the Jin, collapsed in A.D. 316 in the face of attack by foreign tribes from remote regions beyond the northern border of China, and the Eastern Jin Dynasty was established at Nanjing, in Jiangsu Province. As the power of the Jin diminished, three native states emerged on the Korean Peninsula at the beginning of the fourth century: Goguryeo in the north, Baekje in the southwest, and Silla in the east. The southeast remained divided among a group of states called Gaya. The Gaya states had strong cultural and racial ties with the *wajin* (Japanese) of northern Kyūshū, who, as we can deduce from passages in the *Gishi Kanden*, had probably been obtaining iron from there. About the same time the *wajin* were also obtaining iron from Shinkan (later Silla) in the north, using the Gaya region as a base.

Among seventh-century Japanese historical records is the *Kudara-ki*, which deals mainly with the relationship between Japan and Baekje. According to this text, in the year 366 the king of Baekje gave a present of forty ingots of iron together with silk products to an envoy from Japan whom he had invited to his country. This may indicate either that Baekje, through a pact with Japan, was in a position of military supremacy over the neighboring states of Silla and Goguryeo or that Japan planned to secure supplies of iron by strengthening its ties of friendship with Baekje. In the year A.D. 367, the *Kudara-ki* says that Japan dispatched a large army to the Korean Peninsula and attacked both Baekje and Silla. Two years later, Japan dispatched another significant force and attacked Baekje and Goguryeo, gaining possession of Mimana (the Japanese name for one of the Gaya states), which became the center of Japanese interests in the Korean Peninsula. Resources and products of the peninsula were shipped via Mimana to Japan and became an important source of wealth for the Yamato court.

In the eighth-century *Nihon Shoki*, in the section on the fifty-second reign year of Empress Jingū (r. ca. 4th century), it is written that the king of Kudara (Baekje), Shōko (肖古), sent Kūtei (久氐) to Japan with gifts such as the *nanatsu saya no tachi* ("sword with seven branches"), a *nanatsu ko no kagami* ("mirror with seven appendages"), and various other treasures. Scholars believe this indicates that Japan had given military aid to Baekje, and that these presents were an expression of gratitude. The *nanatsu saya no tachi* is thought to be a sword in the collection of the Isonokami-jingū, a Shinto shrine in Tenri City (Nara Prefecture). It has a long inscription in gold, but much of the inlay has become detached and the meaning is unclear. The characters for *tai*, "fourth year," and *katana* (sword) can be discerned, among others, and one theory holds that *tai* refers to the fourth year of the Taiwa (T'ai Ho) era of the Eastern Jin (A.D. 369) and that the king of Baekje had the sword made for the king of Wa. Although this cannot be confirmed, given the many interactions between the two countries it certainly seems possible.

*The Shisei (uji and kabane) system.* The Yamato court absorbed advanced technology and knowledge from the Korean Peninsula, strengthening its military and economic power, and gradually came to form a political system centered on the *ōkimi* (emperor) along with a union of the powerful clans of Yamato and the surrounding environs. The powerful clans were formed of related family groups called *uji*, whose members were called *ujibito*; they were led by a chief called the *uji-no-kami*, who served the Yamato court. Particularly powerful among them were the Soga clan, in charge of the court treasury and diplomatic affairs, and the Katsuragi; both were named after the places where they lived. There were also clans that had particular professions, such as the Mononobe (military and police affairs and arranging Shinto ceremonies), the Nakatomi (court ceremonies), and the Ōtomo (leaders of the *yugei* and the related *saeki*, palace gate guards). The chiefs of the powerful clans who fulfilled these various functions were known as *tomo-no-miyatsuko*.

The Yamato court conferred titles (*kabane*) on the *uji* according to pedigree and status. Among the most powerful *uji*, those of imperial lineage were given *kabane* of *omi* and *muraji*; the most powerful among them, who provided the pillars of government, were called the *Ōomi* (the Sōga clan) and the *Ōmuraji* (the Ōtomo clan), a system referred to as *Shisei*. In addition to the *ujibito*, the *uji-no-kami* controlled subordinates called *benotami* (or *bemin*), who paid tribute in both goods and services. The *bemin* of the clans were called *kakibe*, and those under the authority of the court were called *shinabe* or *tomobe*. Many immigrants from the Korean Peninsula were enlisted for their professional skills as part of this system.

In the distant provinces, clans were appointed governors under the Yamato court, called *kuni-no-miyatsuko* and *agata nushi*, who continued to govern the domains they had previously owned. The Yamato court bestowed the *kabane* of *kimi* and *atai* on the *kuni-no-miyatsuko,* and the *bemin* who paid tribute to the *ōkimi* and the great clans came to be called *nashiro* and *koshiro*. The *yugei* and *toneri*, who served as household guards to the *ōkimi* and the imperial family, were mainly from among the brothers and sons of the *kuni-no-miyatsuko*. The court also established directly managed domains called *miyake* in the provinces to strengthen ties with the powerful clans, whose privately owned lands, cultivated by the *bemin*, were known as *tadokoro*. These lands and the authority of the provincial clans were a major resource and a base of military power for the Yamato court, which when required could be brought to bear through the *uji-no-kami*.

*Kofun culture.* From the late third to the seventh century, megalithic tombs (*kofun*) were built across Japan, most of them constructed by the local ruling clans. A considerable number also testify to the power of the Yamato rulers. The largest is the tomb of Emperor Nintoku, outside of present-day Ōsaka (fig. 1.4). Called the Daisenryo *kofun*, it is a *zenpō kōen* ("rectangular front, circular rear"), or keyhole-shaped tomb. Probably constructed during the fifth century, the structure is 486 meters (1,594 feet) long; the width of the front section is 305 meters (1,000 feet), and the diameter of the rear section is 249 meters (965 feet). Given its maximum height of 30 meters (98 feet), the Daisenryo *kofun* is the largest mausoleum in Japan and is one of the largest built structures in the world.

Ranks of *haniwa* (terracotta figurines of humans, animals, and other forms) were set up outside of *kofun* and deposited on the tops of the tombs of leaders. Along with the *haniwa*, the grave goods found buried in the *kofun* have proved informative about the customs of the wealthy classes of the time. Finds from the fourth-century tombs of the early Kofun period include bronze (rather than iron) mirrors, jewelry and other objects of jade, and equipment used in ceremonies on behalf of the spirit of the dead. In *kofun* of the middle period (5th–6th century), in addition to many bronze mirrors and jewels, great numbers of iron swords, arrowheads, armor, and horse equipment were deposited as well as silver and gold jewelry, pottery, and other such household and personal objects. More than 250 iron swords were excavated from the Shichi Kanyama *kofun* (middle Kofun period) in Sakai City. The Uwanabe *kofun* in Nara, which dates to about the same time, contained many iron objects: 282 large and 590 small ingots, 102 axes, and 139 sickles. Because the *kofun* that were built in the Kinai region after the Yamato court had established a presence in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula contained many more iron implements and raw iron than did earlier *kofun*, it seems probable that much of that iron came from Korea. Certainly the shape of the ingots in the Uwanabe *kofun* is similar to that of ingots buried as grave goods in early tombs in the Korean kingdom of Silla.

The iron swords and sword mountings excavated from tombs of the middle Kofun period and later are similar to those found in Korean tombs of the same period, bearing out statements in written texts that point to close connections between Japan and Korea, and probably also between Japan and mainland China, at that time. For example, the hilt of a *kantō tachi* (a sword with a ring-shaped pommel) in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, said to have been excavated from the Daisenryo *kofun*, closely resembles that of a sword found in the tomb of Munyeong (or Muryeong), emperor of Baekje (r. 501–23) at Gongju, Korea, together with an important tomb inscription dated to A.D. 525.

*Advances in the manufacture of iron weapons.* As mentioned above, an early method of processing raw iron and manufacturing implements from it, including weapons, was brought to Japan about the third century B.C. from the mainland. The technology was not nearly as advanced as that developed subsequently in China and Korea. Some six centuries later, however, another group of metalworkers from the same regions on the mainland brought the Japanese smiths up to date once again.

It is recorded in the *Kojiki*, in the section on Ōjin (by tradition, Japan's fifteenth emperor), that Shōko-Ō, the king of Kudara (Baekje), sent two smiths, called Takuso and Kurehatori, to Ōjin's court, together with presents of a sword and a large mirror. The source of that information in the *Kojiki* is thought to be a passage in the *Kudara-ki*, which implies that many Korean smiths (*kara kanechi*) and smiths from mainland China (*ayanokaji*, of whom Takuso is representative) came to Japan about the time of Emperor Ōjin, who is believed to have lived from the end of the fourth to the beginning of the fifth century. Upon arrival at the Yamato court, Takuso and Kurehatori would have been organized into one of several groups of specialized foreign workers: the smiths, saddlers (*kura tsukuribe*), and potters (*sue tsukuribe*). In the section of the *Nihon Shoki* on Suizei (by tradition, Japan's second emperor), it is mentioned that a Japanese smith (*yamato kanechi*) named Amatsumara was commissioned to make arrowheads. The factuality of Suizei's reign is doubted by most modern historians, however, and accordingly it is unclear when and if the Japanese smith of the *Nihon Shoki* actually lived. Although the originals do not survive, records that formed the basis of the *Nihon Shoki*, such as *Teiki* and *Kyuji*, written in the sixth century, say that Japanese smiths absorbed the advanced technology brought by the Chinese and Korean smiths and made weapons nearly as fine as theirs. Looking

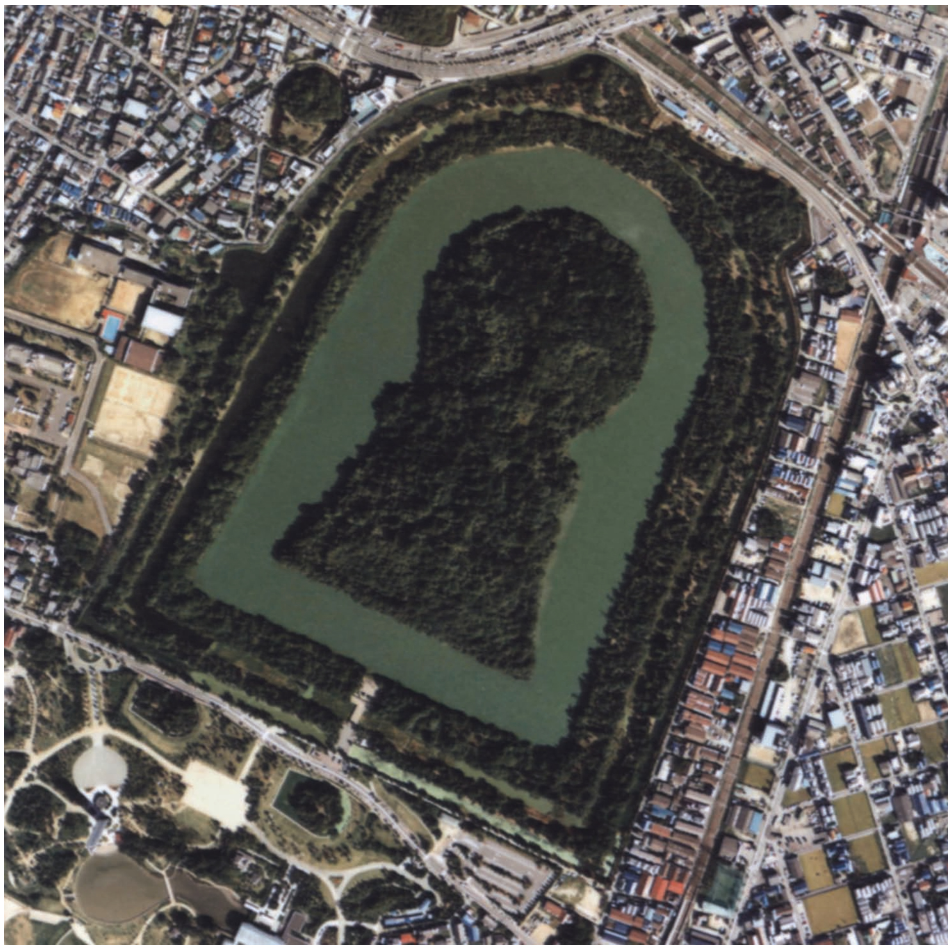


Fig. 1.4. Tomb of Emperor Nintoku, Sakai City, Ōsaka, ca. 5th century. Photo: Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport

at the many technically superb iron weapons excavated from *kofun* after the 400s, we must agree with that statement and conclude that the manufacture of superior iron weapons and the development of an advanced independent technology in Japan date from between the second half of the fourth century and the fifth century.

A number of swords with gold or silver inlaid inscriptions have been excavated from *kofun* (see cat. no. 53), but many of them are heavily corroded and only a few of the characters can be discerned. In 1873 more than 90 objects, including 14 *chokutō* (straight, single-edged swords), 7 *ken* (straight, double-edged swords), armor, and horse equipment were excavated from the Eda Funayama *kofun* at Kikusui-chō (Kumamoto Prefecture). More splendid than any excavated from *kofun* elsewhere in Japan, the Eda Funayama finds, now in the collection of Tokyo National Museum, are in many cases similar to pieces found in tumuli on the Korean Peninsula. In 1906, one *ken* from the tomb (cat. no. 51) was given to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as part of an exchange of archaeological material. In 1965 all of the objects excavated at Eda Funayama were designated National Treasures by the Japanese government, meaning that if the Metropolitan's sword had remained in Japan, it, too, would have become a National Treasure. One of the great pleasures afforded by the present exhibition is the inclusion of the Metropolitan's *ken* among so many other National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties.

An inscription of 75 characters, some of which are illegible, was found on one of the *chokutō* from the Eda Funayama tumulus (fig. 1.5), including one for "Japanese" (*wa*), *ru*, *ō*, and *kimi*, the latter two forming "emperor" (*ōkimi*). Current theory posits that the sword was made in 438 A.D. The inscription also tells us that the maker of the sword was named Ita and that the inscription was written by someone named Choan. In 1968 an iron *ken* 73.5 centimeters (29 inches) long was found during an excavation at the Inariyama *kofun* in the Sakitama area of Gyōda City, Saitama Prefecture (fig. 1.7). Subsequent conservation in 1978 revealed an inscription of 115 characters inlaid in gold. The inscription, which is complete, contains a reference to "Wakatakeru Ōkimi," meaning the "great king" or "emperor" Wakatakeru, and a zodiacal date that may be 471. Comparison of that inscription with the partial one on the Eda Funayama *chokutō* shows clearly that they refer to the same Japanese ruler, probably Emperor Yūryaku, a Yamato ruler during the latter half of the fifth century. These two sword inscriptions are further evidence that the authority of the Yamato court extended from Kyūshū to the Kantō region by the end of the fifth century and that

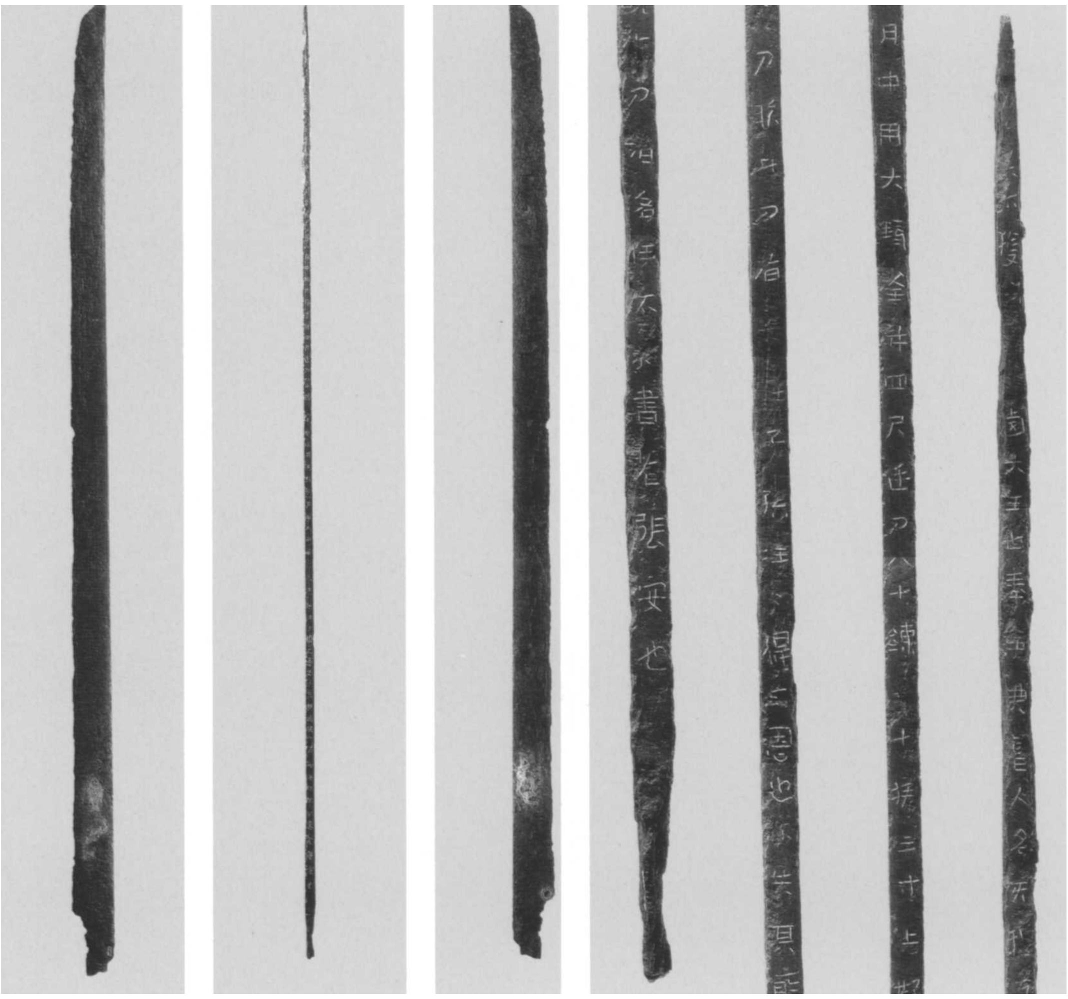


Fig. 1.5. *Chokutō* (straight, single-edged sword) excavated from the Eda Funayama tomb, inscribed and dated 438 A.D. Right: details of the inscription on the back edge

*ōkimi* (大王) was the title (号) of the supreme ruler(s) (君主) of the nation, above the kings (君) in each region. In addition, the inscriptions represent the origins of the Japanese language, including the Yamato tongue, and are the oldest recorded writings in Japan.

The Kokaido-Ō Hi, a large stone inscribed in A.D. 414 with the exploits of Gwanggaeto the Great (Japanese: Kokaido) of Goguryeo, records that this powerful ruler engaged the combined forces of Wa (Japan) and Kudara (Baekje) twice, in A.D. 391 and again in 399. Since "*ōkimi*" is inscribed on that stone, the possibility that the title was also used in Japan about the end of the fourth century must be considered. The word "*tennō*" gradually came to replace *ōkimi* as the word for "emperor" and was in common use at the end of the seventh century, when the rulers who are regarded as the ancestors of the Japanese imperial line, such as Nintoku and Yūryaku, were accorded the honorary title of *tennō*. At the same time, the name of the nation changed from Wa to Nippon.

In sum, we know that by the end of the fifth century fine *chokutō* and *ken* with gold and silver inlaid inscriptions could be made in Japan, and that Japanese smiths had mastered the techniques of contemporary Chinese and Korean

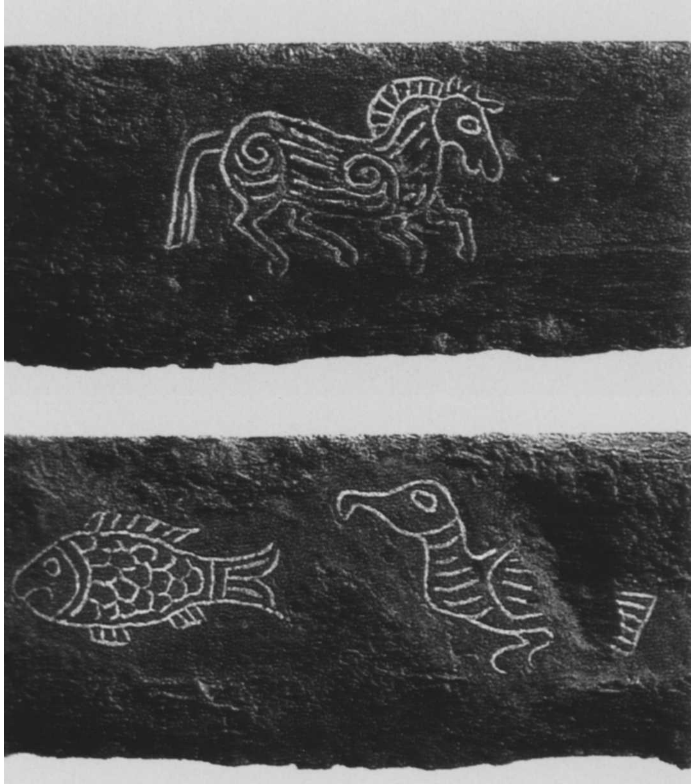


Fig. 1.6. Details of inlaid motifs on the *chokutō* from the Eda Funayama tomb (fig. 1.5)

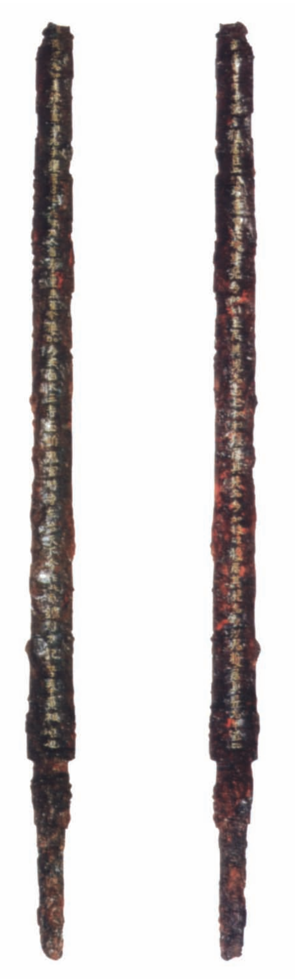


Fig. 1.7. Iron *ken* (straight, double-edged sword) excavated in 1968 from the Inariyama tomb, Gyōda City, Saitama Prefecture

smiths. By adapting and improving on it, they built the foundation for the manufacture of the unique Japanese sword, which eventually would prove far superior to its Chinese and Korean prototypes.

## III. EARLY IMPERIAL JAPAN

### The Asuka Period

Named for a village in Yamato province (present-day Nara Prefecture) where the imperial court resided, with some interruptions, from the early sixth to the early eighth century, the Asuka period is notable for the spread of Buddhism and the replacement of the *uji* system of government by the *ritsuryō* system, which was based on ethical concepts and centralized political institutions.

*Buddhism and the ritsuryō state.* The Buddhist religion, which had been born in India, was introduced to Japan from China through Korea, via Emperor Shōko-Ō, in the year 538. It joined the indigenous, ancient Japanese folk belief system known as Shinto, which is characterized by a profound reverence for nature and a belief in deities known as *kami*. Many of the great clans honored *kami*—often believed to inhabit natural phenomena such as auspicious rivers, mountains, and trees—at shrine festivals. Friction arose between the pro-Buddhist Soga clan and the anti-Buddhist Mononobe clan, however, leading to the vanquishing of the anti-Buddhist Mononobe no Moriya in 587 by the Great Minister (Ōomi) Soga no Umako and Umayado no Ōji (later Shōtoku Taishi, the prince regent), whereupon Buddhism became recognized by the court. Great temples associated with Prince Shōtoku (574–622), such as the Hōryū-ji (the oldest wooden building in the world) and the Shitennō-ji, were built where the Yamato court was situated, in present-day Nara and Ōsaka Prefectures. Many objects representative of the Asuka culture are kept to this day in the Hōryū-ji, such as the *Shaka Triad* (a bronze figure of the Buddha Shakyamuni flanked by two bodhisattvas), the *Guze Kannon* (a figure of the "salvation" bodhisattva, Avalokiteshvara), and the *Tamamushi no zushi* (a shrine decorated with iridescent blue beetles' wings). Among the treasures of the Shitennō-ji are two splendid *chokutō* said to have been worn by Prince Shōtoku himself. Much advanced culture and technology came from China along with Buddhism, and the Buddhist establishment played a major role in the formation of the centralized *ritsuryō* state.

In 592 Emperor Sushun was assassinated by Soga no Umako, who then had the widow of Emperor Bidatsu (538–585) enthroned as Empress Suiko. Her nephew, Shōtoku Taishi, became her deputy, working closely with Umako. Gradually Prince Shōtoku came to believe that a state with authority centralized under the emperor was the ideal. As a strategy to strengthen the power of the emperor and to nullify the strength of the great clans under the hereditary *uji* system, the prince issued a set of principles for ruling the nation, the Seventeen-Article Constitution, as well as a system of twelve ranks for court officials based on ability and achievement. His ideas were not acted upon immediately, but he had laid the groundwork for the Taika Reforms, which would produce a centralized and efficient government in the Chinese style.

During his regency, in the year 600, Prince Shōtoku dispatched an envoy to the Sui emperor of China and followed it with four others, reviving a custom that had fallen into disuse. The purpose of the missions was not only to learn from China but to show that Japan and China were equals in an established diplomatic relationship. Shōtoku's second envoy, sent in 607, carried a message that famously began: "From the Emperor of the Land of the Rising Sun to the Emperor of the Land of the Setting Sun, Greetings." The Chinese emperor flew into a rage upon receiving this document, which implied that Japan was more than China's equal. After the fall of the Sui, the Japanese court sent fifteen envoys to Tang-dynasty China between 630 and 838. During those years, the Tang capital, Chang'an (modern Xi'an), was the repository of cultural material that had come from Europe and the Middle East both by land, along the Silk Road, and by sea. Some of those trade objects are preserved in the Shōsō-in, Nara, the storehouse of the Tōdai-ji temple. The Shōsō-in is also renowned for its large collection of ancient Japanese swords.

Following the death of Prince Shōtoku, the power of the Soga clan increased. After Soga no Umako died in 626, he was succeeded by Soga no Emishi, who along with his son, Iruka, accused Yamashiro no Ōe no Ō—Shōtoku's son—of treason, forcing him to commit suicide. What followed was a period of autocratic control of government under the Soga father and son, who were of a female imperial bloodline and may have harbored ambitions for the throne. As opposition to the Soga's high-handed and aggressive tactics intensified, the increasing influence of the men who had accompanied the envoys to China—including Buddhist monks, scholars of the classic Chinese texts, artists, and government officials—led to a groundswell of enthusiasm for abolishing the old *uji* system of governance, with its private ownership of land and control of labor, in favor of the formation of a system based on the Chinese model, with the emperor at the hub of a bureaucratic central government.

In 645 Nakatomi no Kamatari and Nakae Ōe no Ōji (later Emperor Tenji; r. 622–72) murdered Iruka, and Emishi committed suicide. For this service, Kamatari received a new surname—Fujiwara—becoming the first of a long and famous line of nobles. The uncle of Nakae Ōe no Ōji was enthroned as the Emperor Kōtoku (r. 645–54), and his reign was the first named imperial era (*gengō*) in Japan, reflecting a Chinese custom. The name chosen was entirely appropriate, for events in the Taika era altered the course of history in Japan (*taika* means "great change"). The most important of the Taika Reforms (*Taika no kaishin*), promulgated in 645, were the following:

1. All persons and all land were to become the property of the state (that is, the emperor).

2. Under the central authority, new administrative and military organizations would be set up to govern in the capital, in the provinces (*kuni*) under the *kokushi*, districts (*gun*) under the *gunji*, and villages (*ri*) under the *richō*.

3. A census was to be taken so that a fair redistribution of land could be made (this would be the *handen shūju* system).

4. A new and fair system of taxation based on population would be instituted.

Under the *handen shūju*, a fixed area of land was allotted to every citizen upon reaching the age of six, and that land reverted to the state at death. In return for the allotment of land, the people would be subject to a tax to be paid in rice, produce, and service. The central government was organized into two ministries—the Daijōkan, or Ministry of State, and the Jingikan, or Ministry of the Shinto Religion—and eight departments, one of which was the Hyōbūshō (Department of Military Affairs), under a minister who oversaw the production of arms and armor and controlled the army. The posts within all eight departments were divided into four ranks, in theory based on merit.

Those of the populace who were allotted land shares (*handen*) were required to serve as auxiliaries (*zōyo*) for up to sixty days a year, and one in every three or four adult males was conscripted as a soldier (*heishi*). The *heishi* were trained in regiments in each province, and from among them a number were sent to the capital to serve as the palace guards (*eji*). The *sakimori* troops who guarded the coast of Kyūshū were at first chosen from among all the provinces to serve for a fixed term of three years, but beginning in 730 they were selected from the eastern provinces. The soldiers had to provide their own weapons and subsistence, and the loss of effective labor force from families became a great burden on the populace.

About the time that these momentous changes were taking place in Japan, the Tang emperors allied themselves with the kingdom of Silla in Korea and in 660 they conquered Baekje. Japan sent a large force to aid its Korean allies but was dealt a devastating defeat in 663 at the famous Battle of Hakusukinoe. Five years later, the armies of China and Silla vanquished Goguryeo, and the Korean Peninsula became unified under Silla. Fearing that the Tang might send an expedition against Japan, the Emperor Tenji built numerous defenses, especially in northern Kyūshū, and an army consisting largely of troops from eastern Japan was deployed to man them. Fortunately for Japan, animosity between Tang China and Silla following the fall of Goguryeo forestalled any invasion. Probably in response to this crisis, though, permanent garrisons of soldiers—first the *sakimori* on the Kyūshū coast, directly across from Korea, and later the *chinpei* on the northeast frontier, where the court was extending its control—were put in place to guard the country's vulnerable regions.

With a unified military structure extending across the country, the demand for weapons increased, and *tsukasa* (smith-masters) were appointed to oversee the manufacture and flow of arms to the provincial regiments. The main weapons used were bows, spears, and swords; by the second half of the sixth century most of the swords were made of iron. These blades were of the *chokutō* type (straight and single-edged) and were made in several basic shapes: flat-sided and single-edged (*hira-zukuri*; see cat. no. 50);

beveled and single-edged (*kiriha-zukuri*; see cat. no. 53); and double-edged at the point (*kissaki-moroha*; see cat. no. 109). Although most ancient *chokutō* have disintegrated over the centuries, some survive, including a Kofun-period blade in its *kantō tachi* mounting, housed in the Komura-jinja (Kōchi Prefecture) (see fig. 4.4), and two Asuka-period blades in the Shitennō-ji, known as the "Heishi Shōrin Ken" and the "Shichi Sei Ken." Extant swords of the subsequent Nara period include forty-six swords and nine short swords in the collection of the Shōsō-in at Nara, which houses the personal effects of Emperor Shōmu and other objects. Two of the *chokutō* there are dated to the ninth day of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Tenpyō Shōhō era (752), the date of the Eye-Opening Ceremony (*kaigan kuyō*) of the Great Buddha. The inscriptions probably record the use of the swords in the Bugaku play called *Hajingaku* ("Breaking the Ranks"). These blades, made before the birth of the classic Japanese curved sword, are collectively referred to as *jōkotō* ("ancient swords") and were probably used primarily for thrusting rather than cutting.

The *ritsuryō* system achieved its final form in the Taihō Code, which was promulgated in 701. It differed from the Chinese pattern in two important ways. First, the emperor retained his role as divine cult leader, with heavy ceremonial duties, and despite his theoretical position as sole head of state he actually had little more power than before. Second, the Chinese concept of meritocracy was honored in the letter but not in fact. High court rank and government posts were almost always bestowed on the aristocracy, as applicants were not required to take an examination, as they would have been in China.

## The Nara and Heian Periods

As the administration under the *ritsuryō* system was feeling its way forward, the Empress Gemmei (r. 708–14) built a new imperial capital at Heijō-kyō (Nara). Perhaps reflecting the new centralization of society, the town was given a strict checkerboard plan with the capital at the northern end, in emulation of the Tang capital of Chang'an. The interval between 710, when the empress moved to Nara, and 794 is known as the Nara period. Those years saw the proliferation of Buddhist sects, and many important Buddhist shrines and temples were built, a period of time referred to as the Tempyō culture. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* were both written in the Nara period. In 794 the Emperor Kammu (r. 782–806) moved the capital once again, this time to Heian-kyō (Kyōto). The period thus inaugurated is called the Heian period, and it lasted until 1185. The arts and literature flourished during those years, which also saw the rise of the samurai class.

*Private estates proliferate and tax revenues decline.* From the earliest years of the *ritsuryō* administration, public land slipped into private hands and out of the land-allotment system. Some was given away by the emperor as rewards or gifts to members of the imperial family, the aristocracy, and the great temples in and around Kyōto. Also, those members of the aristocracy who had plentiful financial resources used the farming communities to reclaim forest and moorland as well as to develop farmland, and they took that land for their own large private estates, or *shoēn*. As the burden of tax-paying and service fell ever more heavily on the peasants, many fled from their place of registration under the census and entered into service with the nobility. The expense of maintaining the court rose as revenues fell, and it became necessary to develop new taxable agricultural land. The government tried giving temporary tax exemptions to citizens who cultivated new land parcels and *shoēn* and the right to hold that land for several generations, but by 743 it was forced to recognize that all land in private hands could never be reclaimed by the state.

The year 902 saw the end of the *handen shūju* system. Meanwhile, the court put its energy into increasing the lands it directly controlled, with the intention of raising revenues and furthering the central authority of the state. The Department of Military Affairs dispatched large armies into the northern regions of Honshū between 658 and 805 and succeeded in subjugating the native tribes, called Emishi, who may have descended from the Jōmon people. They were formidable warriors, capable of shooting arrows with accuracy from the back of a fast-moving horse, a skill that the Japanese troops had to master in order to subdue them. During the reign of Emperor Kammu, Sakanoue Tamuramaro (758–811) was appointed *sei-i-tai-shōgun* (Commander in Chief for the Subjugation of Eastern Barbarians). He was presented with the *settō*, a symbolic sword indicating that the bearer had the highest authority as general under the emperor, and was entrusted with overall military command. Tamuramaro responded with energy and shrewdness and suppressed many Emishi. From the late Nara period through the early Heian period, the title *sei-i-tai-shōgun* (usually shortened to "shogun") was awarded to the commanders of expeditionary forces dispatched to the northeast. The title was later assumed by the hereditary military rulers of Japan, beginning with Minamoto no Yoritomo, whose shogunate, or *bakufu* (military government), controlled Japan from 1192 to 1333, during the Kamakura period.

*The rise of the Fujiwara family.* Founded in the seventh century by Nakatomi no Kamatari, the Fujiwara family proliferated in many branches and occupied many important positions at court. By the ninth century, these nobles had taken over some of the power of the emperors themselves and enriched themselves vastly by acquiring *shōen* across the country. Many of the emperors married Fujiwara women, and some Fujiwara men occupied the post of regent (*kampaku*) for adult emperors. Unlike some other clans later, they never attempted to rule in their own right, remaining the power behind the throne. The family declined somewhat in the eleventh and twelfth centuries because of internecine quarreling but still exists today.

Beginning in the middle Heian period (9th century), a native Japanese culture known as the Fujiwara culture emerged, replacing the previous one based on a Chinese model. The unique Japanese writing systems called *hiragana* and *katakana* were developed from *kanji*, the written characters of Chinese, and a national literature began to form, notably the *waka* poem, as seen in the tenth-century poetry anthology *Kokin waka-shū*. A characteristically Japanese painting style known as *Yamato-e* (Yamato pictures) exemplified by the *Chōjū-giga* (Scroll of Cavorting Animals) and the scroll of the *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji) replaced *kara-e*, or Chinese-style pictures.

*The shōen and the emergence of the samurai.* The owners of *shōen* were often religious institutions or nobles who lived in the capital. As absentee landowners, they found it necessary to appoint estate managers called *shōkan* (later *jitō*) to administer their *shōen* and oversee the work of the peasants who farmed them. By the end of the ninth century, some estate managers had gained control of their *shōen* and developed new land of their own, as had some of the local descendants of clan aristocrats and some of the former free peasant farmers. Known as *kaihatsu ryōshu*, or "development proprietors," they lived on their own *shōen* and collected their own revenues. The *kokushi* (provincial government) inflicted such crippling taxes on the *kaihatsu ryōshu* that they sometimes appealed to the central government for protection and occasionally won the right to contribute tax revenue from their lands directly to the central authority. For their part, the court nobility and the great temples used their political power to obtain the privileges of exemption from tax (*fuyu*) and the right to refuse admittance to the *kendenshi* (*funyu*), the officials who inspected land and levied taxes on behalf of the *kokushi*.

Gradually more and more *shōen* became free of state control, signifying the beginning of land management by ordinary people. As time went on, the *kokushi* and the *kaihatsu ryōshu* grew bitterly opposed, and disorder increased in the provinces. To protect their *shōen*, some of the more influential local landowners took into their own hands the task of preserving order, eventually becoming a military class. The warrior-retainers they hired to assist them, called *ienoko* or *rōtō*, were the first samurai. Together, leaders and retainers formed military bands (*bushidan*) that maintained order but also carried on private wars. The bands that formed around descendants of the imperial family, such as the Kammu Heishi, the main branch of the Taira family, who descended from the Emperor Kammu, and the Seiwa Genji, a branch of the Minamoto family, who descended from the Emperor Seiwa, became particularly large and powerful.

Since time immemorial the Kantō plain, in eastern Honshū, had been a wild region, the place where punitive expeditions gathered before marching against the Emishi. It was also an area where fine horses were bred, and the proliferation of *bushidan* there was remarkable. Taira no Masakado (d. 940) was among the Kammu Heishi who put down early roots in Kantō. He established his stronghold in Shimōsa province (present-day Chiba Prefecture), and during the course of repeated struggles sparked by personal quarrels with his relatives he allied himself with some of the small local bands of *bushi* (men of arms) who opposed the *kokushi*. In the second year of the Tengyō era (939), he openly rebelled against the imperial court, attacking and defeating the provincial armies in Shimotsuke (Tochigi Prefecture) and Kōzuke (Gumma Prefecture), and seized most of Kantō, even going so far as to declare himself "Shinnō" ("The New Emperor"). He was overcome and killed by other *bushi* of Kantō, however, led by Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Hidesato. At about the same time, Fujiwara no Sumitomo (d. 941) rose in rebellion at the head of an army of pirates in the Inland Sea. He attacked and overcame government forces in both Iyo province (present-day Ehime Prefecture) and the fortified coastal trading town of Dazaifu, in Kyūshū, causing a great shock to the imperial court. Sumitomo was killed by Minamoto no Tsunemoto, a scion of the Emperor Seiwa.

Both of these rebellions, sometimes referred to as the Jōhei Tengyō no Ran (Jōhei and Tengyō Wars), after the imperial eras in which they took place, were suppressed by *bushi* who hoped to have their merit recognized by the imperial court. But Sumitomo's uprising, in particular, had shown that the court aristocracy were powerless, and the provincial *bushi* became ever bolder. Acknowledging the power of the *bushi*, the imperial court and the aristocracy hired individual samurai as guards within the palace, as bodyguards for the aristocracy, and as security guards on the streets of the capital. "Samurai" is the noun form of "*saburau*," meaning to be armed and protect high-ranking persons; the word "samurai" is also written with the second character of *bushi* (士). After the middle Heian period, the samurai who were appointed to guard the interior of the imperial palace used to gather at the *takiguchi*, an outlet for a stream of water constructed in the palace garden. Most of these *takiguchi no bushi* ("warriors of the waterfall outlet") had been appointed to their posts from among the upper-class samurai in the *bushi* bands.

Until the tenth century, warfare had been conducted mainly on foot. As horses came to be more frequently used, the requirements of mounted combat had to be taken into consideration, and many improvements were made to the manufacture of swords. During this period of transformation from the *chokutō* (straight sword) to the curved blade familiar today, other types were made, including swords of *kissaki-moroha-zukuri* construction (a ridged blade that is double-edged only at the point), such as the *tachi* named "Kogarasu-Maru" (Little Crow) in the Japanese Imperial Collection (fig. 1.8b). Another type has only a slight curve to the blade and a strongly curved hilt with a piercing in the shape of a pair of tweezers (*kenuki*). An example of the latter is the *kenukigata tachi* (fig. 1.8c) in the collection of the Ise Chōkokan, which has a *shinogi* (longitudinal ridge). A blade with a *shinogi* and a strong curvature in the hilt was convenient for thrusting but was far better suited to cutting.

Some eighty years of peace followed the Jōhei and Tengyō Wars, until, in the third year of the Kannin era (1019), the Ruzhen peoples of Manchuria invaded Iki and Tsushima (present-day Nagasaki Prefecture), landing in Hakata Bay. The samurai of the Kyūshū region, led by Fujiwara no Takaie, governor of Dazaifu, turned them back, but the invasion of Japan by an enemy from across the sea caused much consternation among the nobility, who had grown overly accustomed to a luxurious lifestyle and were powerless to counter such an attack. With the weakness of the court exposed, governmental control in the provinces became disrupted, brigands and vagabonds proliferated, and there were many local riots and uprisings as society grew more unstable. In the sixth year of the Eishō era (1051), Abe no Yoritoki, commander in chief of the Emishi of Ōshū province who had become subjects of the *ritsuryō* state in the eighth century, rose up against the central government. Known as the Earlier Nine-Years' War, the rebellion was suppressed in the fifth year of the Kōhei era (1062). In the second year of the Ōtoku era (1085), members of the Ōshū Fujiwara clan plunged northern Honshū into a conflict known as the Later Three-Years' War. Minamoto no Yoshiie was dispatched to pacify the situation, which he did in the first year of the Kanji era (1087). During these disturbances, large numbers of weapons were used, and there were many alterations and improvements in the design of arms and armor.

A type of sword convenient for both thrusting and cutting from the back of a horse had been in use from about the middle of the tenth century and was perfected by the early eleventh. It was a *tachi* of *shinogi-zukuri* construction—which has a longitudinal ridge and a transverse ridge at the point—with a slender, deeply curved blade about 75 centimeters (29½ inches) long that gradually straightens and narrows close to the point, which is small (fig. 1.8e). At first, such weapons were used by only a few high-ranking samurai. Scholars therefore assume that straight swords of earlier types were also carried into battle until the Earlier Nine-Years' War or the Later Three-Years' War. Notable changes in armor style include the combination of plate armor (*tankō*) and flexible scale armor (*keikō*) in order to make suits with a four-piece *kusazuri* (skirt) covering the lower body and upper legs, as convenient for warfare on horseback. In place of a handheld shield, large *sode* (shoulder guards) protected the upper body, freeing hands for other tasks. Helmets were made from ten or so trapezoidal iron plates joined together with rivets. This kind of armor, called the *yoroi* or *ō-yoroi* (see cat. no. 3), came into use at about the same time as the curved sword: between the middle tenth and early eleventh centuries.

*The Hōgen and Heiji Wars.* The Heishi (Taira) and Genji (Minamoto) clans first engaged in large-scale warfare in 1156 in a clash called the Hōgen no Ran. At the beginning of the twelfth century the Genji, a leading military family in the Kantō region, saw their fortunes decline because of internal discord. In contrast, the Kammu Heishi, who had built their base in Iga and Ise provinces (present-day Mie Prefecture), became more powerful. One of the latter, Taira no Kiyomori (1118–1181), having suppressed the pirates of the Inland Sea, gained the trust of "retired" Emperor Toba (Toba Jōkō), who had been forced to give up the throne in favor of his five-year-old son, Sutoku, but retained power and was even able to force Sutoku to abdicate in 1142. ("Jōkō," "Daijō-kō," or "Daijō-Tennō" were titles taken by an emperor upon his abdication. If a retired emperor became a Buddhist monk, he assumed the title "Hō-ō.") Kiyomori became a retainer of the retired emperor, and the influence of the Taira increased markedly. Early in the year 1156 (the first year of the Hōgen era), the retired emperor died, and Sutoku, who had a Fujiwara mother, claimed the inheritance for the Fujiwara family. He joined forces with Minister Fujiwara no Yorinaga, who had quarreled with his brother, the regent Fujiwara no Tadamichi, and he gathered together a number of samurai backers, including Minamoto no Tameyoshi and Taira no Tadamasa. Angered, Go Shirakawa, another son of Toba Jōkō who had succeeded to the throne, formed a close relationship with

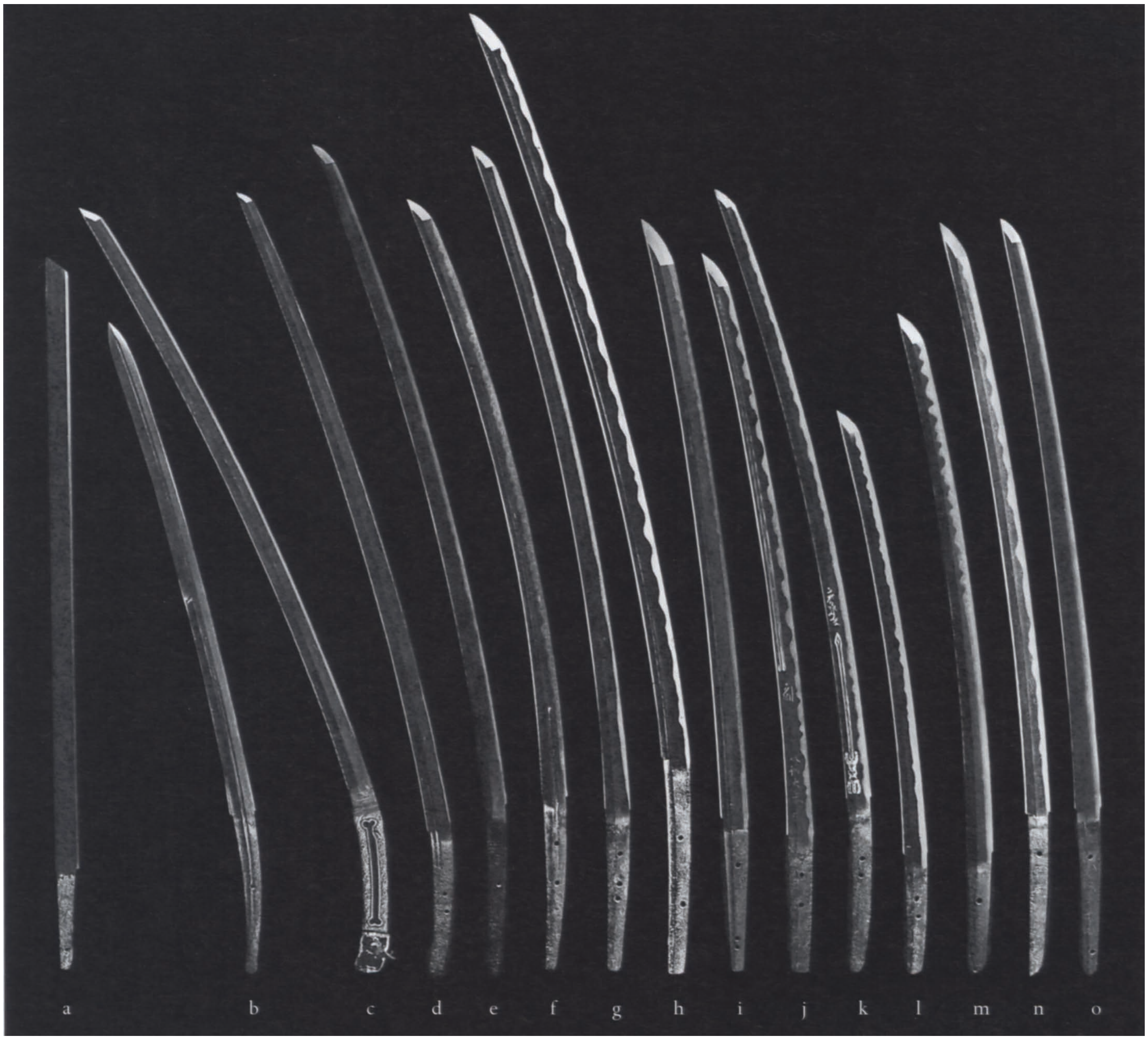


Fig. 1.8. Shapes of *tachi* and *katana* blades

Councillor Tadamichi, who was himself a retainer of Fujiwara no Michinori (the poet Shinzei), and enlisting the support of Kiyomori and Minamoto no Yoshitomo, a son of Tameyoshi, attacked Sutoku Jōkō and defeated him. As a result, the retired emperor was banished and Yorinaga and Tameyoshi were both executed.

A few years later, the men who had fought for Go Shirakawa Jōkō had a violent disagreement, and in the first year of the Heiji era (1159), the Heiji Disturbance (Heiji no Ran) broke out. Fujiwara no Nobuyori, one of Shirakawa's retainers, who had an antipathy toward Shinzei, raised an army together with Minamoto no Yoshitomo and the following year killed Shinzei. But Nobuyori and Yoshitomo were soon crushed by the military might of Taira no Kiyomori, and Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), son of Yoshitomo, fled to Izu province (now Shizuoka Prefecture). Although the number of *bushi* mobilized during both these wars was small, it was clear that the power of the *bushi* had tipped the balance in favor of Taira no Kiyomori, whose authority and control rose dramatically.

*The Taira government.* Within ten years of the Heiji Disturbance, Kiyomori was elevated to the post of *daijō daijin* (chancellor), and his entire family, including his son

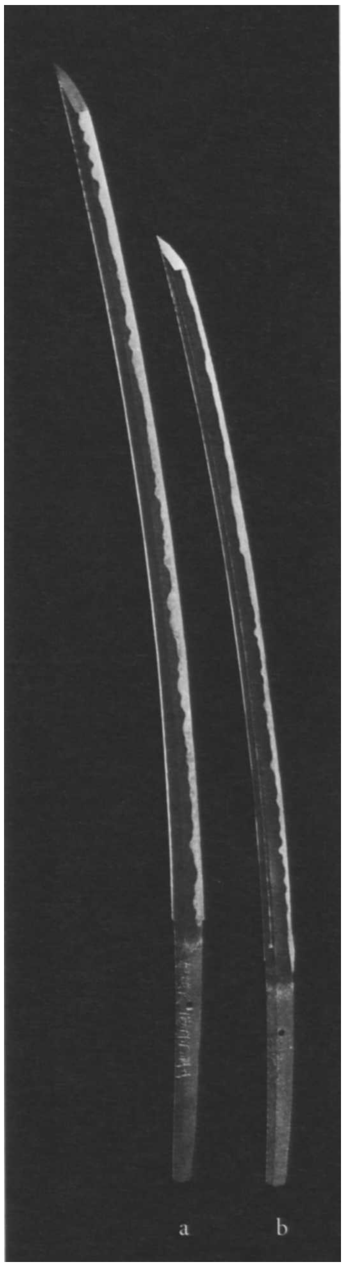


Fig. 1.9. Edo-period blade shapes

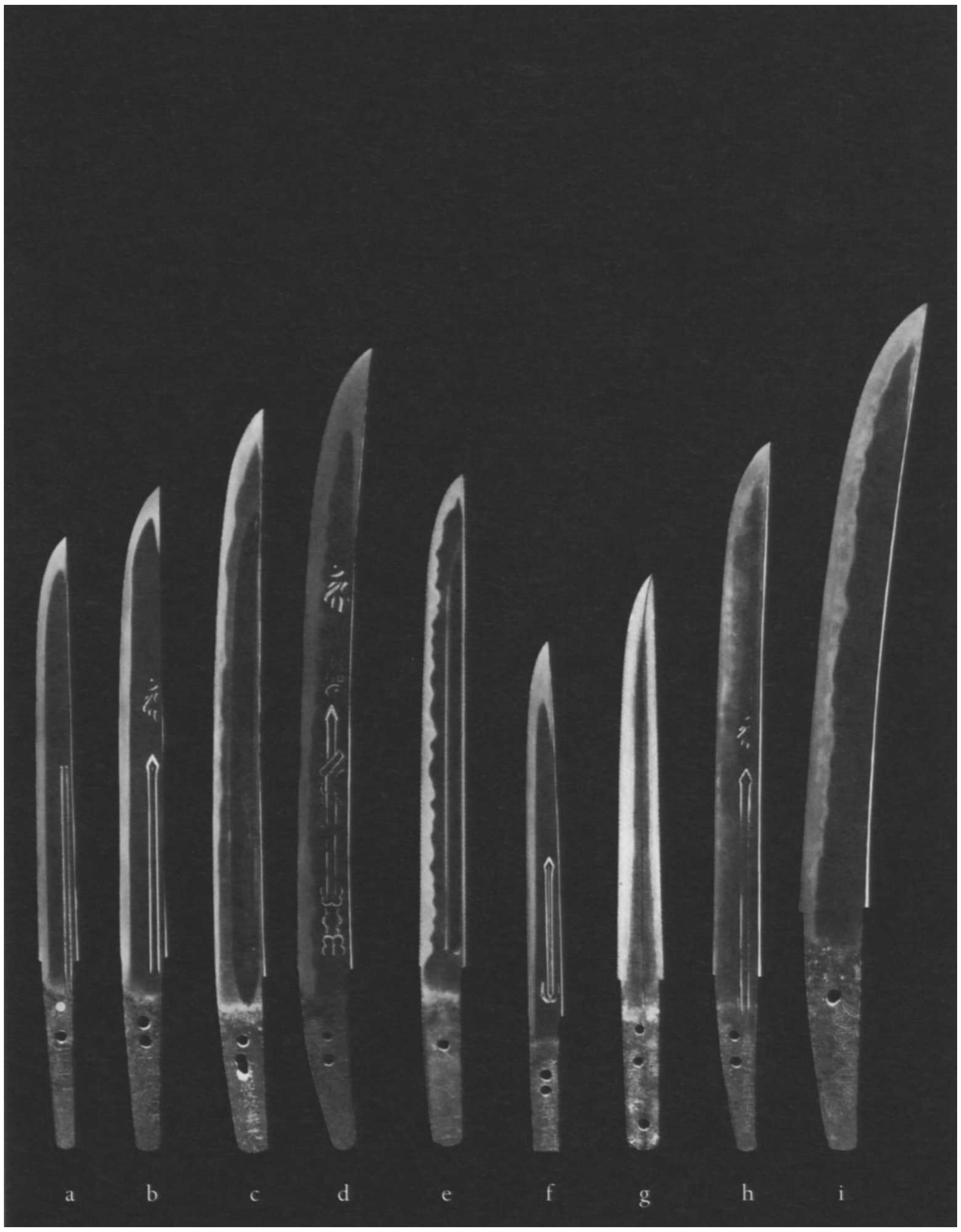


Fig. 1.10. Shapes of *tantō* blades

Shigemori, were promoted to high office, so that none could match the Taira in power and influence. At the same time, *bushi* bands in the provinces increased in numbers. Kiyomori succeeded in attracting to the Taira ranks followers among the *bushi* groups across the Kinai region (the provinces surrounding the capital) and on Shikoku Island. His daughter became a consort of the Emperor Takakura (r. 1169–79), and their child Antoku succeeded to the throne. Kiyomori thereby became a *gaiseki* ("material relative") of the emperor, an influential and prestigious position. His ties with the imperial family and his considerable wealth (he owned more than five hundred *shōen*) made his position remarkably similar to the one previously enjoyed by the Fujiwara family. The political authority of the Taira, a warrior clan, thus had assumed a strongly aristocratic character.

Kiyomori had made enemies of the Fujiwara and Minamoto clans, however, who remained strong in the remote provinces. Discontent also began to rise among the nobility and the priests of the great temples in Kyōto, who until then had wielded considerable power. In 1180 Minamoto no Yoritomo, whose life had been spared by Kiyomori at the end of the Heiji Disturbance because of his extreme youth, assembled an army and rode out against

Kiyomori. He proved to be a commander of superior ability, as was his brother Yoshitsune (1159–1189), and in 1185 they destroyed the Taira in a naval battle fought in the strait that separates Honshū from Kyūshū.

## IV. FEUDAL JAPAN

### The Kamakura and Nanbokuchō Periods

After the fall of the Taira in 1185, Minamoto no Yoritomo was appointed shogun by the emperor, and in 1192 he set up Japan's first military government (*bakufu*) at Kamakura, a city in Musashi province (present-day Kanagawa Prefecture) south of modern Tokyo. It replaced the moribund *ritsuryō* system of government, centered on the emperor and nobility, with a system based on personal loyalty of retainers to their lord. The years between 1185 and 1333 are called the Kamakura period, which was followed by a short interval (1333–92) called the Nanbokuchō period, when the imperial throne was claimed by two rival courts.

During these two hundred years, Japan experienced almost incessant warfare, including two invasions from the mainland and several widespread famines. So much suffering inspired a mood of pessimism and anxiety in the people, who turned in great numbers to the solace of religion. Three new Buddhist sects emphasizing salvation—Jōdo-shū (Pure Land Sect), Jōdo-shinshū (True Sect), and Nichiren-shu (a revivalist sect founded by the monk Nichiren)—and two schools of the meditative Buddhist sect known as Zen claimed many adherents, particularly among the warriors and the lower classes.

*The Kamakura bakufu.* Minamoto no Yoritomo's new government did not entirely replace the imperial government in Kyōto, for the shogun made sure he obtained the approval of the emperor on important decisions, and the emperor and the court nobles still controlled their own land; however, Yoritomo remained at Kamakura, near his power base and safe from court interference, and his authority as military governor was supreme. His system of rule was simple. Confiscated estates belonging to the Taira and other enemies were given to his retainers (*gokenin*), old and new, who acted as stewards (*jitō*). They had a share in the produce of the estate, kept the peace, and collected a small tax that helped support the *bakufu*. In each province one *jitō* became constable (*shugo*), responsible for maintaining order at that higher level of government. The *shugo* and *jitō* for the most part were selected from among the powerful of the *gokenin*. Three bureaus oversaw matters at the highest level. The *mandokoro* handled finance and general administration, the *monchūjo* judicial matters, and the *samurai-dokoro* the affairs of the *gokenin*.

The basis of *bakufu* control was the feudal master and vassal relationship between the shogun and the *gokenin*. By appointing the *jitō* from among his *gokenin*, Yoritomo, as their lord, guaranteed them hereditary control over the domains and allotted them new lands for meritorious service. The *gokenin* were required to serve in time of war and to act as *ōbanyaku* (officials responsible for the guards at the palace gates) in Kyōto, and as *banyaku*, in service at the *bakufu* in Kamakura.

In this way, the *bushidan* who had widened their influence as *kaihatsu ryōshu* (development proprietors), especially those in the eastern provinces, were organized as *gokenin* by the *bakufu* and appointed as *jitō* by the shogun to manage the estates in the provinces. The eastern provinces were thereby effectively pulled under the control of the *bakufu*, and in those and other regions the duties that had belonged to officials of the government under the *ritsuryō* system were assumed by the *shugo*. Yoritomo's system thus can be likened to the European feudal system, in that a lord granted income from land to his vassal in return for service (*hōkō*), usually military service.

*Warfare.* The tactics, equipment, and spirit of the samurai of the late Heian and early Kamakura eras are recorded in the thirteenth-century illustrated scroll of the *Heiji monogatari* (Tale of Heiji) (see figs. 1.13, 4.7). The samurai are usually shown mounted and wearing the *ō-yoroi* armor suited to cavalry encounters (figs. 1.11, 1.12). With a bow in one hand, wearing a *tachi* suspended from the waist, and with a *koshigatana* passed through the belt, they seem well equipped indeed. The *rōtō*—retainers who were attendants of the samurai—wear light armor of the *dō-maru* type, with a multisectioned skirt attached to the cuirass, suitable for use either on horseback or on foot, and they carry staff weapons (*naginata*). Many have *tachi* suspended from the waist and *koshigatana* thrust through the belt. Cavalry engagements began first with single shots of arrows exchanged between generals followed by volleys of arrows from a distance; battles were then finished in close combat using *tachi*, *naginata*, or *tantō*. The *tachi* are of Heian-period shape—like the one by Munechika (cat. no. 56)—which remained in use during the thirteenth century. Very few *tantō* exist from the Heian and early Kamakura periods. We know they were made, however, and assume that most were discarded after long use.

*The rise of the Hōjō and the Jōkyū War.* The Hōjō family came from a small town of that name in Izu province (present-

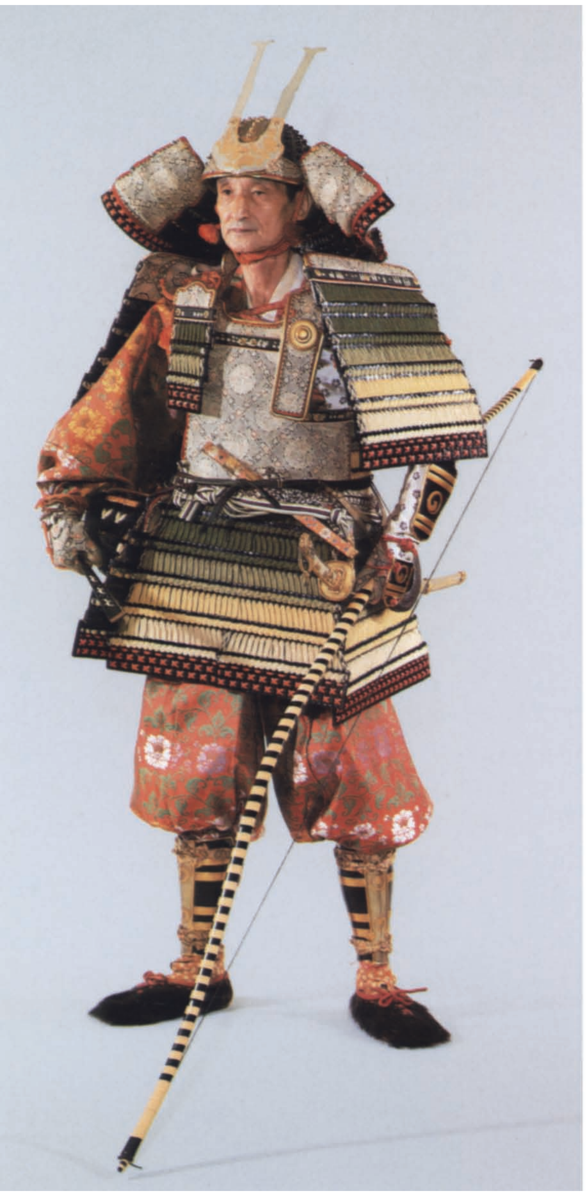


Fig. 1.11. Professor Suzuki Keizō wearing reproduction 12th-century armor and carrying typical Kamakura-period weapons

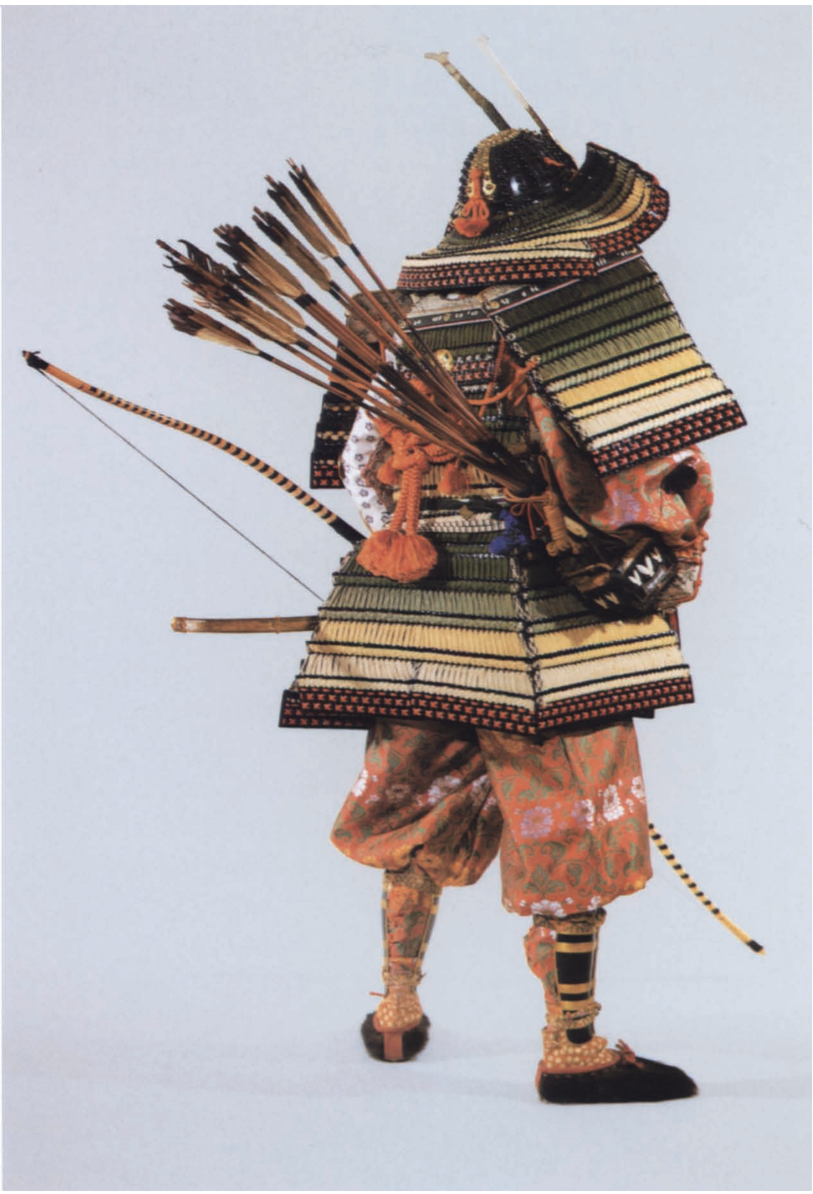


Fig. 1.12. Back view of armor shown in fig. 1.11

day Shizuoka Prefecture). As retainers of Minamoto no Yoritomo, they were given power and eventually the hereditary position of regent (*shikken*) to the shogun in 1199, the year Yoritomo died. The first two regents proved intelligent and ruthless while the second regent, Hōjō Yoshitoki (1163–1224), was able to eliminate his enemies and consolidate the power of the Kamakura shogunate so thoroughly that it lasted until 1333. Yoshitoki's son, Hōjō Yasutoki (1183–1242), introduced the first code of samurai law, the *Jōei-shikimoku* in 1232, and it heralded the golden age of the Kamakura *bakufu*.

In the process of consolidating his power, Yoshitoki had clashed with the retired Emperor Go-Toba (r. 1184–98), a famously strong figure who had continued to control the throne during the reigns of his sons. For his part, Go-Toba had decided to eliminate the shoguns and their regents and restore power to the imperial line, a conflict fought out in the third year of the Jōkyū era (1221). Go-Toba and his allies were defeated, however, and the authority of the military families became absolute. A cultivated man, Go-Toba wrote books on sport and music as well as *tanka* poetry, and he had an anthology of verse, the *Shin Kokin-shō*, compiled in 1205. He also loved swords and is said to have tempered some himself (see cat. no. 62). According to the Ōei-era copy of the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi* (cat. no. 211), Go-Toba selected great swordsmiths from across the country and had them make swords in his residence. These craftsmen were known as the *Go Ban Kaji* (Smiths in Rotational Attendance at the Palace).

*Samurai culture.* During the thirteenth century, a robust samurai culture emerged. Since the sixth century, Buddhism had flourished in Japan, especially among the aristocracy, and the great monasteries and temples enjoyed considerable social power. As the authority of the court nobility waned, however, the two sects that had been favored by the nobility, Shingon-shū and Tendai-shū, declined. The religious revival in early feudal Japan was fueled by different sects—the already mentioned Jōdo-shū, Jōdo-shinshū, and Nichiren-shū, and the two Zen sects of Rinzai and Sōtō Zen introduced from Song China in 1191 and 1227, respectively.

The purpose of the Zen religion is to achieve wisdom or enlightenment through *zazen* (seated meditation) or *jiriki hongan* (seeking salvation through self-training or aesceticism). This suited the frugal, disciplined lifestyle of the samurai, with its emphasis on both spiritual and physical training. Moreover, the Zen sects' way of thinking transcended life and death and captured the warriors' hearts. With the new sects came a magnificent Buddhist architecture from Song China, together with a powerful sculptural style, exemplified by the two gigantic wooden *Kongō Rikishi* (Guardian Deities) at the Nandaimon gate of the Tōdai-ji in Nara, made by Unkei (ca. 1148–1223), Kaikei (ca. 1182–ca. 1236), and several of their contemporaries, which may be said to symbolize the Kamakura samurai.

The literature of the time also reflected the influence of the samurai, as military stories such as the *Heiji monogatari* and *Heike monogatari* became very popular. Just as the aristocratic culture of the Heian period could be described as *taoyame-buri* (gentle and feminine in style), so the culture of the Kamakura period could be described as *masurao-buri* (violent and masculine in style). Splendid scrolls with battle scenes were painted, such as the brutally realistic *Night Attack on the Sanjō Palace* (fig. 1.13), which shows the soldiers of Minamoto no Yoshitomo in full armor. The style of Kamakura swords, too, was influenced by the fashions of the *masurao-buri* culture. One magnificent and beautiful example is a *tachi* by Yoshifusa (cat. no. 63). It has a deep *koshi-zori* curvature, in which the center of the curve is closer to the tang than to the point, and a tempering pattern (*hamon*) of luxuriant *chōji* ("clove blossom" shapes). The point itself is a powerful *ikubi-gissaki,* or "boar's-neck point," meaning the ratio of the width of the blade at the point section to its width at the base is somewhat greater than that of previous swords. The notable smiths of the age also made many *tantō*, such as one by Yoshimitsu (cat. no. 68), which is about 24 centimeters (9½ inches) in length and has a slightly inward curvature.

The *tachi* of the late Kamakura period were somewhat thinner in cross section, with less *hira-niku* ("flesh"). The point had become slightly longer, and the curvature was centered on the middle of the blade, as can be seen in a

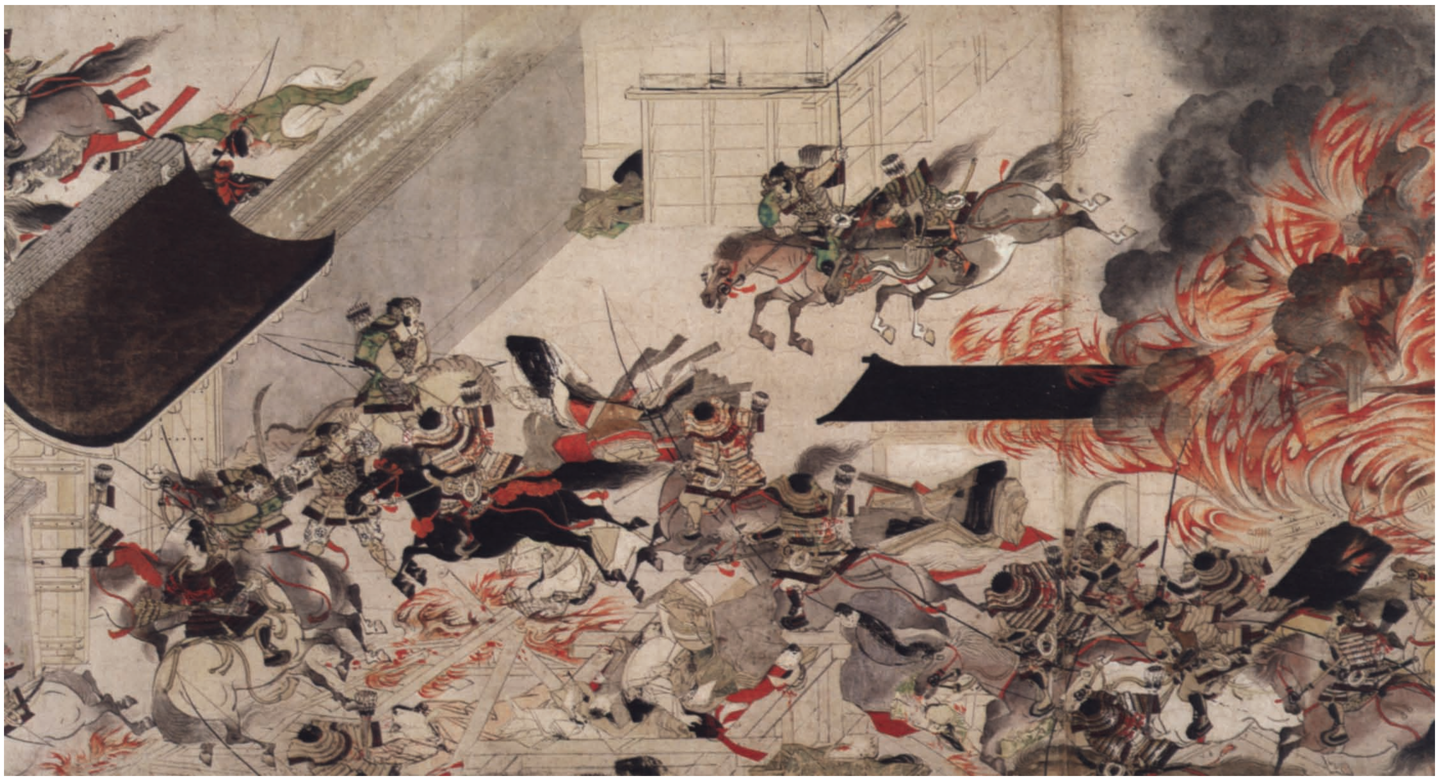


Fig. 1.13. Detail of *Night Attack on the Sanjō Palace*, from the *Heiji monogatari ekotoba*, handscroll, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century. Ink and color on paper. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Fenellosa-Weld Collection (11.4000)

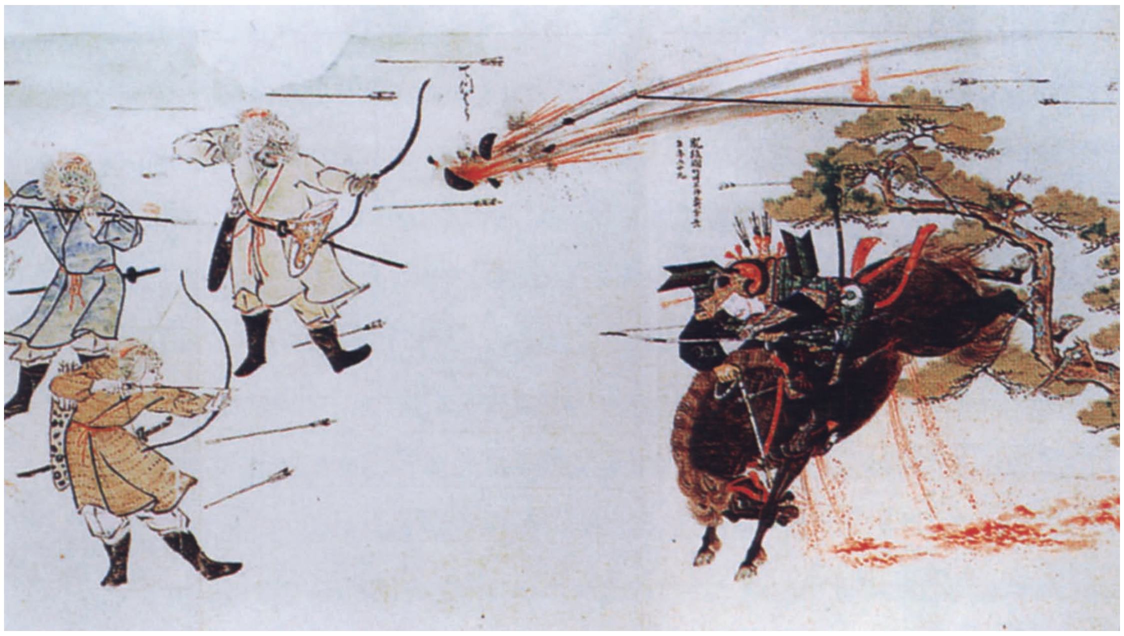


Fig. 1.14. Detail of the *Mōko Shūrai ekotoba*, handscroll, 1293. Ink and colors on paper. Imperial Collection, Japan. Copy of original by Fukuda Taika, 1846, Tokyo National Museum (inv. no. A-1637)

sword by Chikakage (fig. 1.8g, a National Treasure). *Naginata* are depicted in many illustrated scrolls and referred to in written records; although we think that many were made, there are only a few surviving examples (see cat. no. 78). Whereas the *tantō* of the middle Kamakura period had a slight inward curve, most late-Kamakura-period pieces were straight with no curvature (see fig. 1.10b).

*The Mongol invasions.* Late in the thirteenth century, the Mongols swept into China from the steppes, conquered the Southern Song dynasty, and established themselves there as the Yuan dynasty. In 1266 they dispatched envoys to Japan demanding tribute, but the shogunal regent refused. In 1274 and again in 1281, the Yuan sent armed expeditions to Japan. The first army consisted of 30,000 men and the second a huge force of 140,000 men, but the stubborn resistance of the Japanese forces and a timely typhoon forced them to withdraw. These events are known in Japan as the Bun'ei and Kōan campaigns, after the eras in which they occurred; together they are referred to as Genkō, or the "Expulsion of the Yuan" (fig. 1.14).

The methods of warfare and the military costume and other equipment of the Mongols were different from those of the Japanese army. The Mongol soldiers wore leather armor, and in addition to staff weapons they were equipped with a firearm: a kind of cannon. Both cavalry and infantry also employed massed tactics. Warfare in Japan changed in accordance with the valuable experience gained in fighting the continental army, gradually moving from mounted warfare to massed battle with infantry carrying *tachi* and *naginata*. Evidence for this is the fact that in pictures of the period some mounted samurai wear the *dō-maru* suitable for foot soldiers (cat. no. 6) and others the *ō-yoroi*, which had been worn since the Heian period by archers on horseback.

*Nanbokuchō: The Northern and Southern Courts.* The Kamakura government survived the shock of the attack by the Mongols, but victory in the Genkō campaigns was different from victory obtained in the internal wars of Japan. No new domains were available to give as reward to the samurai commanders who had so stubbornly fought off the invaders. The samurai lords had borne a heavy burden of expense during the campaigns, and the lives of many had become very difficult. Dissatisfaction with the *bakufu* increased. In 1333 Emperor Go-Daigo (r. 1319–39) joined forces with the disaffected samurai, and supported by a turncoat Kamakura general named Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358), he toppled the *bakufu* at Kamakura, an event known as the Kemmu Restoration. The government Go-Daigo then established was one in which the emperor and the court held excessive political power (*Tennō shinsei*), and in a few years the samurai lords became disillusioned with the system. Taking advantage and control of the situation once again, Ashikaga Takauji turned against Go-Daigo and drove him out of Kyōto. The latter set up his court, known as the Southern Court, at Yoshino, outside of Nara, and Takauji's candidate for emperor, Kōmyō Tennō (r. 1336–48), was enthroned at Kyōto, with Ashikaga Takauji as his shogun. A civil war ensued that lasted until 1392, when the forces of the Northern Court, backed by the samurai, gained advantage over the Southern Court, which was centered on the emperor and the court nobility. The Ashikaga were able to maintain a degree of peace around

Kyōto during those years but never controlled the whole country, nor did the warrior lords consider themselves vassals of the shogun; instead, the system disintegrated into several groups of local lords and their retainers.

There were innumerable battles between the armies of the rival courts during the Nanbokuchō period. Since many took place in mountainous regions, soldiers fought on foot more often than earlier in the Kamakura period, and close combat using *tachi* and *naginata* became the norm. *Tachi* with a wide blade, such as the National Treasure sword by Tomomitsu (cat. no 91), were advantageous in hand-to-hand combat. Some dating from this period are more than 160 centimeters (5 feet) in length. In the late Muromachi and Momoyama periods, many of these extremely long swords were cut down (*suriage*) so that they could be worn thrust through the waist as *uchigatana*, with the cutting edge facing up. The *katana* by Kunishige (cat. no. 92) is one such converted long sword. *Tantō* were also wide and long (see fig. 1.10c,d), with a significant curvature, and were generally larger than in the Kamakura period. We know from the literature that a type of spear called the *yari* came into use toward the end of the Kamakura period, but very few examples survive today. The elaborate armor (*ō-yoroi*) made for mounted combat was unsuitable for combat on foot and was replaced by the *haramaki* (see cat. nos. 8, 9) and *dō-maru* (see cat. nos. 6, 7), which were lighter and allowed far more ease of movement.

## The Muromachi Period

Between 1392 and 1573 Japan was ruled by shoguns of the Ashikaga family residing in the Muromachi district of the capital, from which the period takes its name. The imperial court, now reunified, was also located in Kyōto. Neither the shoguns nor the emperors, however, exercised control over the entire country. As in the late Kamakura period, power was in the hands of local lords, or daimyo, who ruled in feudal fashion over their retainers and exercised absolute control over their own domains. The period also saw a rise in the economic status of the lower classes and an economic boom in the country in general. Technological advances were made in agriculture, and the craft industries flourished. Towns and port cities increased in size and number, and foreign trade expanded. Zen Buddhism was the dominant religion among the nobles and shoguns, and Zen monks returning from study in China transmitted their firsthand knowledge of Chinese culture countrywide. The darker side of the Muromachi period was the continual warfare—for the most part power struggles between lords and vassals and between lords—reflecting the inability of the central government to impose order.

*Early Muromachi (1392–1467).* On the cultural front, contact between the warrior class and the nobility increased, and the two societies gradually merged. A flourishing trade between Japan and the Ming dynasty in China commenced at the beginning of the fifteenth century and continued until about 1550. During that time, according to the *Daijō-in Jisha Zaki* (Various Records of Shrines and Temples of the Daijō-in) and the *Zen Rinkoku Hōki* (a history of diplomatic relations among Japan, Korea, and China, compiled by the monk Shūhō in 1470), the most important exports from Japan to Ming China were swords, sulfur, *maki-e* lacquerware, and folding fans. A *tachi* made by the Japanese smith Nobukuni bears a Ming-dynasty date of the ninth month of the second year of the Seika (Chinese: Chenghua) era, which is equivalent to the first year of the Bunshō era, or 1466, in Japan. It was one of an estimated 300,000 exported over a period of 150 years.

The shape of the *tachi* of the early Muromachi period is at first glance much like that of the *tachi* made during the middle Kamakura period, but some were also made in the Nanbokuchō style—for example, one by Morimitsu (fig. 1.8k), with the center of the curvature forward of the center of the blade. Gradually, this type of sword was replaced in Muromachi times by the *shinogi-zukuri uchigatana* of about 67 centimeters (26⅜ inches) in length; also, as mentioned above, many Kamakura *tachi* were cut down to make *uchigatana*. These changes reflect a transition from fighting on horseback wearing *ō-yoroi* armor and carrying a *tachi* suspended from the waist to fighting on foot in hand-to-hand combat. The *uchigatana* is thought to have been much used in battle, together with the *yari* and the *naginata*. The *ō-yoroi* virtually disappeared during this time in

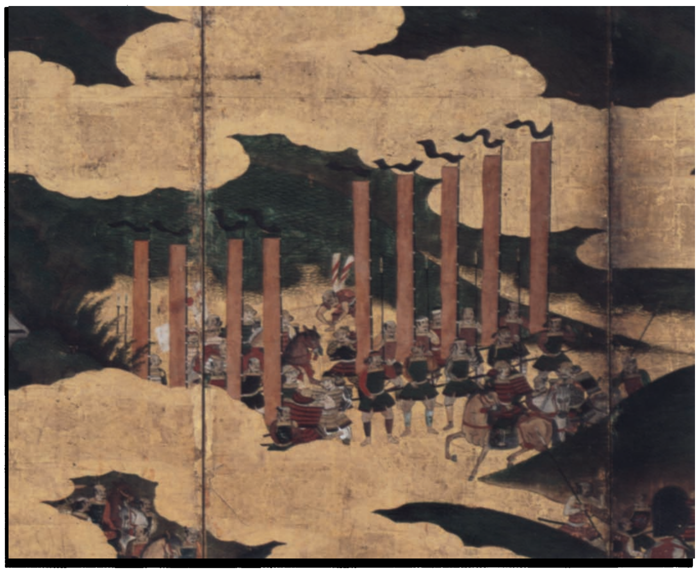


Fig. 1.15. Detail of *The Battle of Nagashino*, Edo period, 17th century (cat. no. 204)

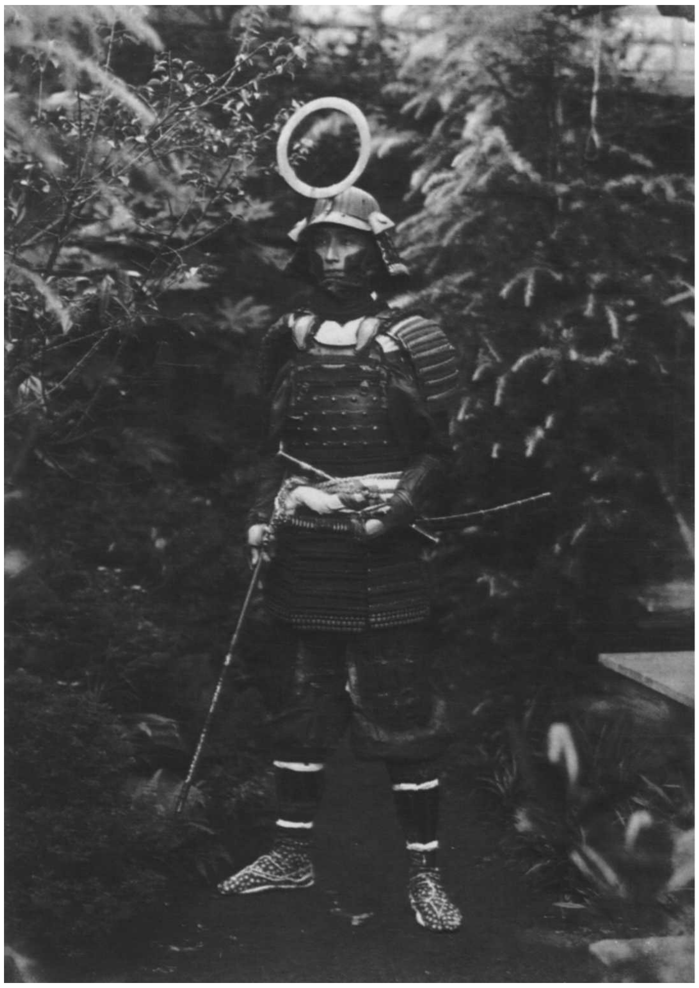


Fig. 1.16. *Tōsei gusoku* armor. Photograph: early 20th century

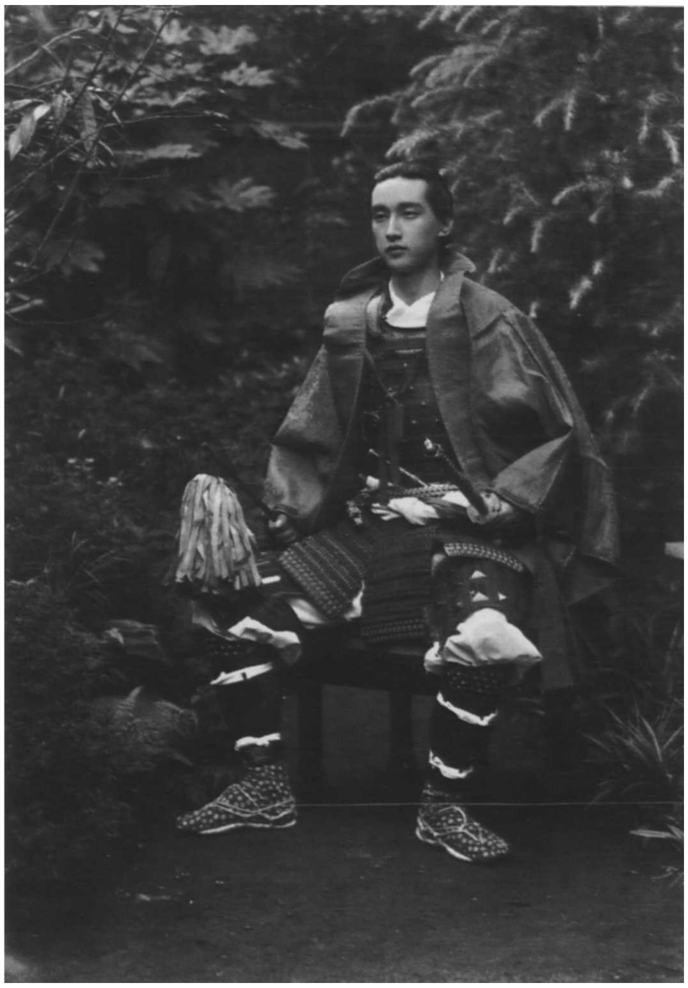


Fig. 1.17. A *dōfuku* (surcoat) worn with a *tōsei gusoku* armor. Photograph: early 20th century

favor of the lightweight armor of the *dō-maru* and *haramaki* types. From this period onward, *shinogi-zukuri* and *hira-zukuri wakizashi* blades were frequently worn tucked into the belt. *Tantō* were *hira-zukuri* in shape, not curved, and about 27 centimeters (10⅝ inches) in length. Superficially they are reminiscent of *tantō* made in the middle to late years of the Kamakura period.

*Late Muromachi: The Ōnin War and the Sengoku-jidai.* Toward the end of the 1460s, the Ashikaga shogun Yoshimasa (r. 1449–74) and his family became embroiled in a power struggle over succession between the two daimyo of the Hosokawa and Yamana families. For eleven years, beginning in the first year of the Ōnin era (1467), some 270,000 soldiers fought in and around Kyōto. At the end of this conflict, known as the Ōnin War (Ōnin no Ran), Kyōto lay in ruins, and the whole of Japan, from coast to coast, was plunged into disorder for roughly a century, a period of turmoil known as the Sengoku-jidai (Age of Wars).

Since the Kamakura period, as the strongest of the samurai grew ever more powerful, they became *shugo* daimyo, meaning those entrusted with the security of estates. At the beginning of the Sengoku-jidai, the *shugo* daimyo usurped authority and formulated a law, the Bunkoku-hō, that allowed them to manage the domains they had amassed. Those who succeeded in controlling these domains are called the *sengoku* daimyo. Well known among the latter are, for example, Hōjō Sōun (1432–1519), Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), and Oda Nobunaga (1534– 1582). In 1573, Nobunaga expelled the last Ashikaga shogun from Kyōto, ending the Muromachi period.

Warfare in the middle and late Muromachi period was conducted by groups of infantry in combat at close quarters. The *yari* (see cat. no. 98), which had been but sparsely used in the late Kamakura and Nanbokuchō periods, now became a weapon of major importance, and many famous pieces have survived from that time. Then, in the twelfth year of the Tenbun era (1543), guns arrived in Japan—in a Portuguese boat blown off course on its way to Okinawa (an alternate theory holds that guns were introduced to Japan from China before that time by Japanese pirates, or *wako*). In the blink of an eye, firearms had spread across

Japan, and they soon had a significant effect on castle architecture and military strategy. Lightly armed foot soldiers called *ashigaru* became the common fighting force. They were formed into divisions, some in companies equipped with matchlock guns and others in conventional companies carrying *yari*. The matchlock companies would fire at the enemy, and the *yari* companies would attack them during the ensuing confusion, after which swords would be used by all combatants. The first battle in which guns were used in large numbers was at the fortress in Nagashino (Aichi Prefecture) in 1575, when the combined forces of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) fought against Takeda Katsuyori (1546–1582), a *shugo* daimyo (fig. 1.15). The combined Oda-Tokugawa army, possibly armed with as many as three thousand guns, gained a resounding victory. Nobunaga then proceeded to destroy the Takeda family in 1582, opening the prospect of conquering the entire country.

Because the conventional Japanese armor (*yoroi*), composed of small iron or leather plates laced together, was poor defense against either the gun or the *yari*, sheet iron came to be used for the cuirass. Some armors of this type were imported from Europe and are referred to as *nanban-dō* (see cat. no. 15). Eventually, armor that could be mass-produced was introduced; these are known as *tōsei gusoku*, or "modern armor" (figs. 1.16, 1.17). There are a number of theories regarding the origin of *kawari-kabuto*, the "exotic" helmets that became popular in the Muromachi period and which are distinguished by their often grand, naturalistic, and sculptural shapes. The use of matchlock firearms on the battlefields of Japan encouraged the adoption of simpler types of helmets, such as the *zunari-kabuto* (head-shaped helmets), which have smooth surfaces formed of three to five iron plates and were designed to deflect musket balls. In this way they were much more effective against firearms than the traditional but more attractive *hoshi-kabuto* and *suji-kabuto*, which were constructed of dozens of small iron plates. It is thought that to make helmets of the *zunari-kabuto* type more attractive, and to make themselves more imposing on the battlefield, samurai commanders added large and decorative *maedate* (crests) of various shapes to *zunari-kabuto* and other simpler forms of helmets. Also, once firearms and artillery were introduced to Japan they were adopted very rapidly, widely, and effectively. (Some writers even maintain that by the end of the sixteenth century there were more matchlock guns in Japan than in any other country in the world.) Guns and cannon produce copious amounts of black smoke, however, severely restricting visibility. It is possible, therefore, that *kawari-kabuto*, with their dramatic shapes and sizes, were developed, at least in part, in response to the need for commanders to be clearly seen by their troops under battlefield conditions. (Some commanders even injected a sense of humor by incorporating wooden grave markers [*gorintō sotoba*] on the top of their helmets.) Given the strong influence of *nanban* styles at the time, it is also possible that ornate and highly embossed European helmets, such as the famous lion-headed helmet in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (23.141), may have also contributed to the creation of the *kawari-kabuto* fashion. The same influence can be seen in the large and exotic *umajirushi* (camp standards) and *sashimono* (personal flags) as well as *jinbaori* (armor surcoats) decorated with bold designs on cloth imported from Europe.

A *katana* by Sukesada (fig. 1.8m), with its strong *saki-zori* curvature (increasing near the point) and length of about 66 centimeters (26 inches), is typical of blades from the late Muromachi period. *Wakizashi* were of the *shinogi-zukuri* type and were about 56 centimeters (22 inches) long. It became customary to wear an *uchigatana* and a *wakizashi* thrust together through the belt, a practice that gave birth to the later *daishō* (matching pair of swords) style. *Tantō* were generally *hira-zukuri* in form, of small proportions (about 20 centimeters [7⅞ inches] long), and were made with a slight inward curvature (fig. 1.10f). This period also saw the appearance of the double-edged (*moroha-zukuri*) *shinogi-zukuri* type of *tantō*.

Against the background of this world of warfare, an aesthetic developed that emphasized suggestion, simplicity, restraint, and impermanence with a hint of imperfection, expressed in the term *wabi-sabi*. In architecture, the flowering of this culture, known as Higashiyama, is exemplified by the Silver Pavilion (*Ginkaku-ji*), the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa's "unfinished" retirement villa in Kyōto. The tea ceremony also reflects its influence, as do the many Zen-inspired gardens of the period. In painting, the Zen monk Sesshū (1420–1506) initiated the golden age of *suiboku-ga* (monochrome ink painting), in which the touch of a brush tip and a splash of ink can evoke the side of a wintry mountain or a tree enveloped in mist.

## V. THE UNIFICATION OF JAPAN

### The Azuchi-Momoyama Period

The roughly one hundred years of chaos that followed the Ōnin War were brought to an end by three men: Odo Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), all of whom were from the area around Owari province (present-day Aichi Prefecture). After toppling the Ashikaga shogunate, Nobunaga worked to consolidate his suzerainty over Kyōto and its environs.

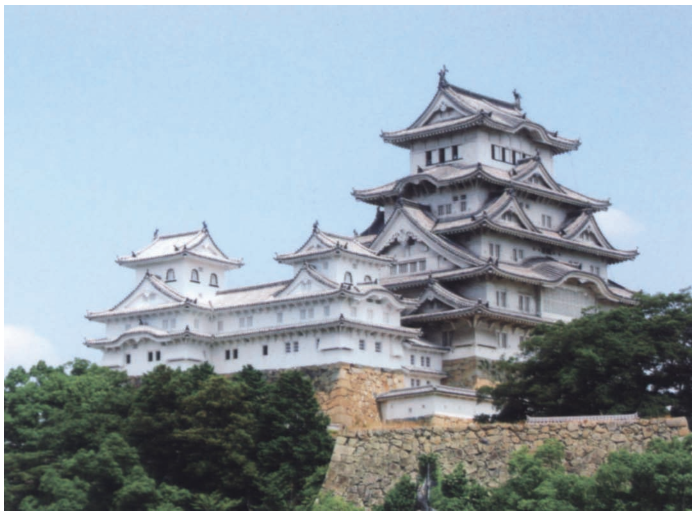


Fig. 1.18. Himeji Castle, Hyōgo Prefecture

He built a castle at Azuchi, near Lake Biwa, and rode out from there to fight the neighboring daimyo. He was successful in reducing the military power of the Buddhist temples, favoring the Christian missionaries, who were making Christianity a popular religion in and around Kyōto. Nobunaga was forced to commit suicide after he was trapped in a burning temple by a treacherous vassal in 1582. Hideyoshi, his ally and top general, avenged his death and by 1590 had brought all of Japan under his own control. (Hideyoshi built a castle, Fushimi, in the Momoyama area of Kyōto in 1592–96; the Momoyama period is officially known as the Azuchi-Momoyama period after Nobunaga's and Hideyoshi's strongholds.) Hideyoshi supported the emperors, ruling from behind the throne as *kampaku* (an ancient title assumed by regents or advisers to adult emperors) and then as *taikō* ("retired *kampaku*"), but was effectively the absolute ruler of the country. To his faithful vassal Tokugawa Ieyasu he gave most of the Kantō area as his domain.

The important programs carried out by the Toyotomi administration were a land survey (*taiko-kenchi*) and the so-called Sword Hunt (*katana-gari*). In 1591, the year after Hideyoshi had unified Japan, he dispatched officials (*bugyō*) throughout the country to survey the arable land using a newly standardized system of weights and measures. The annual yield of rice on the lands of the daimyo was thereafter calculated in terms of a unit called the *koku* (about 180 liters), and each daimyo's annual income was expressed in *koku* of rice. For the lords, it corresponded to the military service they were required to give. Those directly concerned with production—the farmers—had to pay taxes in return for recognition of their right to cultivate the land they were allotted. The *shōen* system, which had been introduced in the eighth century, thus came to an end with the introduction of the *taiko-kenchi*, which was retained and continued by the Tokugawa *bakufu* into the nineteenth century. In 1588, as a means of preventing unrest among farmers and to make them concentrate primarily on agriculture, Hideyoshi confiscated their swords, which thereafter could be carried only by members of the upper class. In 1591 he proclaimed the *Hito Barai Rei*, laws prohibiting people from changing their occupation, thereby fixing class distinctions among the soldiery, farmers, and merchants.

Hideyoshi died in 1598, leaving his young son, Toyotomi Hideyori, under the protection of five generals, one of whom was Tokugawa Ieyasu. The joint regency was doomed to fail, as Ieyasu had ambitions for his family's future. After a two-year struggle for power, Ieyasu defeated Hideyori's supporters, first at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and again at Ōsaka Castle in 1615, bringing an end to the Momoyama period. The last of the unifiers himself died the following year, but the Tokugawa shogunate he founded endured until 1868.

The Momoyama culture was rich and dynamic, fueled by a healthy economy and the energy of a people liberated from the violence of war. Most representative of the age, perhaps, are the castles—including the iconic Himeji Castle (fig. 1.18)—built like fortresses to withstand firepower, surrounded by moats, and with high stone walls, great central towers, and large buildings on the grounds within. The interiors were decorated with monumental screen and mural paintings enhanced with gold leaf by artists such as Kanō Eitoku (1543–1590), Hasegawa Tōhaku, and Kaihō Yūshō (1533–1615). It is also said that the *shoin-zukuri* style of palace architecture, which was adopted for samurai houses in the Muromachi period, was perfected at this time.

It should be noted that while the Momyama period is often defined in political terms as the time between Oda Nobunaga's entry into Kyōto in the eleventh year of the Eiroku era (1568) and the Battle of Sekigahara in the fifth year of the Keichō era (1600), in a cultural context the true florescence of the Momoyama aesthetic—centered on the region containing Kyōto and Ōsaka—occurred during the fifteen years between Sekigahara and the summer siege of Ōsaka Castle, in 1615. Moreover, in terms of sword history, the Momoyama is dated between the first year of the Keichō era (1596) and the end of the Kan'ei era (1644). Swords made before then are called *kotō* ("ancient swords") and those made after are referred to as *shintō* ("new swords"). Momoyama swords resemble the *tachi* of the middle Kamakura and Nanbokuchō periods that were cut down in the Muromachi period to be used as *uchigatana* (cat. no. 92). Many *hira-zukuri wakizashi* blades (cat. no. 103) and many *tantō* of this period are similar in appearance to their Nanbokuchō counterparts.

*Hon'ami Kōetsu.* One of the most important figures in the evolution of Momoyama culture was Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), who was born into a family that for generations had thrived as appraisers, polishers, and custodians of swords. Their skills and duties included *te-ire* (blade storage), typically in plain wood preservation scabbards (*shirazaya*); cleaning and lightly oiling the blades where necessary to prevent rusting; and the changing and storage of mountings and fittings in paper and silk bags and, in some cases, in decorated and lacquered boxes. The Hon'ami family was employed by the Ashikaga shoguns as well as by Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Following the ascent of Ieyasu, they were also retained by the Tokugawa family until the demise of the shogunate.

Kōetsu's father, Kōji, worked first for the Imagawa family and then for Oda Nobunaga. During the Tenshō era (1573–92) he was retained by Maeda Toshiie, and generations of the family continued to serve the Maeda family (see cat. no. 119). At the same time as Kōetsu was applying his skills to the traditional Hon'ami professions, he was also practicing calligraphy. He eventually established the Kōetsu school, and together with Shōkadō Shōjō and Konoe Sanmyakuin he was renowned as one of the "Three Brushes [calligraphers] of the Kan'ei Era." He also made fine pottery and excelled in *maki-e* lacquerwork. According to the *Sugawara Shi Matsuda Hon'ami Keizu* (a genealogy of the Hon'ami family), a cousin of Kōetsu's was the wife of Tawaraya Sōtatsu, one of the most important Momoyama-period painters, which if true would explain the large number of surviving *waka* poems written by Kōetsu on decorative paper for handscrolls specially prepared by Sōtatsu.

By the first year of the Genna era (1615) Kōetsu led 55 students, assistants, and family members to the Rakuhoku Takagamine locality—to land that had been given to him by Tokugawa Ieyasu—and there established a village called Kōetsu Mura, where he concentrated on art activities in addition to the traditional Hon'ami occupations. Among his surviving works are two National Treasures—a lacquered writing box known as "Funabashi Maki-e Suzuribako," and the teabowl known as "Fuji-san." The Important Cultural Properties by him include two handscrolls of *waka* poetry written on painted paper prepared by Sōtatsu, a copy of the *Risshō Ankoku-ron* (an antiestablishment treatise by the Buddhist monk Nicheren written in 1260), two teabowls, and three pieces of lacquerware. Of all the objects designated National Treasure or Important Cultural Property, those by Kōetsu are the largest in number by a single artist and the most varied in type.

## THE EDO PERIOD

The era of Japanese history between 1603–15 and 1868 is called either Edo, after the small fishing village where Tokugawa Ieyasu built a castle before he became shogun and later established his capital, or Tokugawa, after the *bakufu* government he founded. The Tokugawa shoguns maintained firm control over the daimyo during those years. The national economy expanded very rapidly until the early 1700s, and an affluent urban middle class emerged. The arts, and especially painting, flourished. In 1639, fearing foreign ideas and intervention by Western powers, with which Japan had been trading to its great profit, the *bakufu* shut Japan's doors to the outside world, permitting commercial exchange exclusively with the Dutch, the Koreans, and the Chinese and only through the southern port of Nagasaki. The Japanese merchant class continued to prosper, but the daimyo and their retainers suffered because their incomes, tied to agricultural production, which did not expand at the same rate as other areas of the economy, were fixed. At the end of the period, unrest among the peasants and the samurai shook the country's confidence in the Tokugawa *bakufu*, and in 1868, after a short civil war, the imperial line was restored to power in the person of the Emperor Meiji.

*The Tokugawa bakufu.* In the eighth year of the Keichō era (1603), Tokugawa Ieyasu was named *sei-i-tai-shōgun* by the emperor, and he established his *bakufu* government at Edo (present-day Tokyo). In order to maintain the hard-won peace, Ieyasu limited the number of castles that could be built in each daimyo's domain—in this era called a *han*—to one only, and he had all other castles demolished under the edict *Ikkoku Ichijō Rei* ("one domain, one castle"). To prevent a surprise attack on Edo, he relocated some of the daimyo. The Mito clan, who were directly related to the Tokugawa, and many *fudai* daimyo, who had served the Tokugawa from the start, were moved close to Edo; the *tōzama* daimyo, who had been retainers of the Toyotomi but fought on the side of the Tokugawa at Sekigahara, were moved to distant provinces in Kyūshū, Chūgoku, Shikoku, and the Tōhoku region.

Ieyasu introduced other measures, too, in the *Buke-shohatto* (Laws for the Military Houses) to tighten his control over the daimyo. Since Kamakura times, various unwritten virtuous principles such as *Kyūba no Michi* ("Way of the Bow and the Horse"), *Buke no Narai* ("Customs of the Samurai Houses"), and *Tsuwamono no Michi* ("Way of the Warrior") had developed among the samurai. Advocating such virtues as allegiance and obedience to one's lord, valor, discipline, and a keen awareness of duty and shame for failure, these codes formed the basis of the later warrior codes called Bushido. The first clause in the *Buke-shohatto* edict issued by Ieyasu in the first year of the Gen'na era (1615) instructs that "One should become thoroughly acquainted with both the scholarly and martial arts of riding and archery"; in another part, issued by the fifth Tokugawa shogun, Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), it was noted that "One should practice the scholarly and martial arts, piety to the lord and one's parents, and correct etiquette." From the beginning, the samurai code had placed great importance on the acceptance of class distinctions, and that idea had been reinforced by ethical concepts of Neo-Confucianism, brought to Japan from China by Zen monks in Ashikaga times. Neo-Confucianism also taught the morality of a hierarchical distinction between lord and vassal and between father and son, and that precept proved to be a convenient tool for controlling the *han*, both by the daimyo and by the Tokugawa *bakufu*.

The Neo-Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1657) was employed in 1608 by Tokugawa Ieyasu to help him draft laws and develop a political philosophy to serve as an intellectual and moral basis for government. Razan and his family were retained by the *bakufu* until the late Edo period. One exceptionally shrewd ordinance issued in 1635 in an updated version of the *Buke-shohatto* called for all the daimyo to live in Edo every other year, alternating in two groups: what is known as the *sankin kōtai* system (see cat. no. 210). Their wives and children would live there on a permanent basis, as virtual hostages. During their year in Edo, the daimyo were forced to behave as courtiers under the watchful eye of the shogun. The distraction of moving back and forth with a large group of retainers every twelve months and the expense of maintaining a house and staff in the capital also made it less likely that they would conspire and rebel.

The relationship between the shogun and the daimyo was that of lord to his retainers. A retainer's lands—considered to be the gift of the shogun—had to be valued at more than 10,000 *koku* in order for him to qualify as a daimyo. In exchange for land, the daimyo gave the shogun military service, and they established similar relationships with their own retainers; however, most of the daimyo's vassals held no land from him but received stipends calculated in bags of rice. The *han* paid no taxes to the shogunate but provided soldiers for guard duty at Edo. The shogun's own domain encompassed about one-quarter of the country. In addition to the revenues from those lands, the shogun received income from the gold mines of Sado and Izu and the silver mines of Iwami and Tajima. He also controlled the commerce and industry of Edo, Ōsaka, Sakai, and Nagasaki, and he had the power to mint coins.

Fearing European interference in the internal affairs of the country, Tokugawa Ieyasu began to suppress Christianity, and later shoguns followed his lead. By the middle of the seventeenth century, more than three thousand Christians had been killed, and most foreign missionaries had died or fled the country. In 1639, under an edict called Sakoku (Closed Country), foreign trade was severely restricted and Japanese citizens were forbidden to travel abroad. These two developments are an indirect reason why for two centuries Japan was spared foreign wars and was not ensnared in the colonial activities of the European powers. During that time, a uniquely Japanese culture developed, the effect of which on the art and culture of European nations has been inestimable.

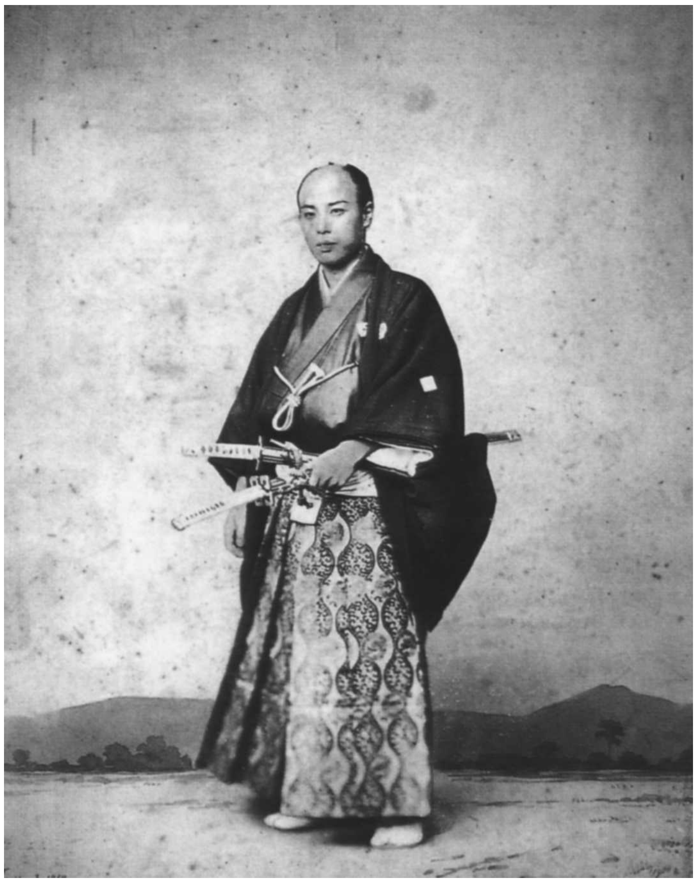


Fig. 1.19. Unarmored samurai wearing a *daishō* pair of swords

*Culture and society.* The most important objective of the Tokugawa shoguns was to maintain the status quo politically and socially. They preserved most of the feudal forms of earlier times, putting a brake on social mobility and reinforcing class lines, and they instituted the Confucian division of the population into four classes: samurai (meaning the entire warrior class), peasant farmers, artisans, and merchants. The samurai were also the government administrators. They were allowed to have a family name and had the right to carry a *daishō* pair of swords, comprising the long *katana* and the short *wakizashi* (fig. 1.19), and they were not allowed to intermarry with members of the lower classes. Certain people of high standing in other classes were also granted a family name and allowed to wear a *wakizashi* (but not a *katana*) with a blade less than 60 centimeters (23⅝ inches) in length. Wealthy merchants in this category could afford to commission *wakizashi* from the best smiths in the country, and many of those fine examples from the Edo period still exist.

During the seventeenth century, Kyōto and Ōsaka were the main centers of commerce and cultural activity while Edo was the political nexus of the country. The city dwellers of this period avidly pursued whatever was new in literature and art but also helped preserve such cultural genres of the past as the Nō drama, the tea ceremony, and the art of flower arranging (*ikebana*). At the end of the century and continuing for about a decade into the eighteenth century, there was a flowering of culture that is named after the imperial era Genroku (1688–1703). Literacy spread widely among the townspeople, and Haikai poetry and Kabuki theater became major genres. New trends in painting included decorative landscapes executed in the splendid manner of Hon'ami Kōetsu and Ogata Kōrin and painting and prints in the genre called *ukiyo-e*, or "pictures of the floating world." The latter show scenes of everyday city life, views of famous places, and portraits of famous actors and beautiful women in styles ranging from vigorous and emotional to charming and witty. During the Bunka Bunsei era (1804–29), when Edo, too, had become culturally vibrant, drawing its strength from a lower-class urban public, a popular literary culture arose, with a proliferation of novel-writing in different genres and various types of verse.

In order to maintain their skills during this protracted era of peace, the samurai were obliged to practice the martial arts, and especially *kendō* (swordsmanship), both in solitude as a Zen-like exercise and under the instruction of a master. For this practice swordplay, swords of wood or bamboo were devised. This new activity was reflected in the design of real swords, which, as the memory of actual warfare became fainter, grew straighter and progressively narrower toward the point. An example is a *katana* by Kotetsu (fig. 1.80), which curves very little and tapers toward the point (*chū-gissaki*) in the Kanbun *shintō* style (meaning swords made in the Kanbun era [1661–73]). Because fewer swords were needed during this period, swordsmiths took the opportunity to concentrate on the artistry of their craft. Accordingly, tempering patterns (*hamon*) became more flamboyant and picturesque, including the newly devised *tōran-ba* (fig. 1.20), whose grand undulations are sometimes likened to stormy ocean waves. There was a counter movement, however, that urged a return to the austere, elegant swords of the Kamakura and Nanbokuchō periods. The swordsmith Suishinshi Masahide (1750–1825) began to preach *fukkōtō* (restoration sword) theory to his many students and to research the forging methods of the old masters.

Late in the Edo period, the senior councillor of the *bakufu*, Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758–1829), ordered a survey of the extant ancient treasures of Japan and had them published in 1800 in the eighty-five-volume *Shūko Jusshu* (Ten Categories of Collected Antiquities), which was illustrated with pictures of the objects and provided details such as dimensions and current ownership. Many armors and swords based closely on the Heian and Kamakura pieces illustrated in the *Shūko Jusshu* were subsequently made (see, e.g., cat. no. 25). Under the influence of "restoration sword" ideology, and partly because of growing unrest in the country, sword use increased, and many of the blades were designed in the style of either the late Kamakura or the Nanbokuchō period. A fine example of the latter is the *katana* by Minamoto Kiyomaro (cat. no. 108). At the same time, many highly luxurious mountings and sword fittings were also produced.

*The Kanagawa Treaty.* Beginning about the middle of the eighteenth century, ships from Russia, England, and America visited Japan, hoping that the island-nation would open its ports to commerce and trade. On July 8, 1853, a squadron of four American warships under the command of Matthew C. Perry dropped anchor in Tokyo Bay. Perry presented representatives of the shogun with a letter from the American president Millard Fillmore, requesting that Japan open her ports. The *bakufu* promised to consider the letter. Early the following year, Perry returned, this time with a larger flotilla of ships. In March the *bakufu* concluded the Convention of Kanagawa and opened two ports, Shimoda and Hakodate; four years later, Japan and America concluded the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which revealed Japanese weakness in the face of American military might. Many Japanese felt shame at having signed this treaty and similar ones later with England, Holland, and Russia. The unpopularity of these "unequal treaties" would help to bring about the fall of the shogunate within two decades.

About the middle of the Edo period, a revivalist movement called Kokugaku (National Studies) had become influential in Japan. Its members looked back to a golden age of pure Japanese culture, "unspoiled" by Chinese influence. Reverence toward the emperor was also part of that ideology. When Chief Minister Ii Naosuke signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858 without consulting the emperor, those who opposed opening Japan to overseas trade joined with a faction known as Sonnō Jōi (Revere the

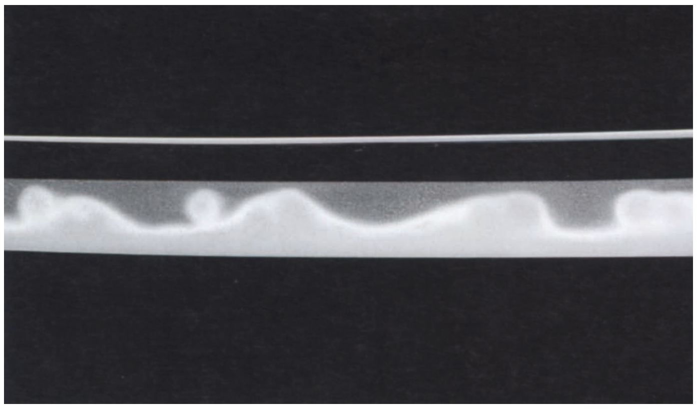


Fig. 1.20. *Tōran-ba* tempering pattern

Emperor and Expel the Barbarians) in opposition to the *bakufu*, which maintained an "Open Nation" ideology. During the next years, there was constant friction between the Sonnō Jōi and Open Nation factions. Armed conflict broke out several times between the *bakufu* and the large Satsuma and Chōshū samurai clans, who formed the Satchō Alliance to overthrow the Tokugawa *bakufu*.

### THE MEIJI ERA

The Meiji era (1868–1912) proved to be as tumultuous and politically forward-looking as the Edo period had been peaceful and politically backward-looking. A multitude of reforms were undertaken—the dissolution of the shogunate, the abolition of every trace of feudalism, and the adoption of Western institutions, including constitutional government. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Japan had weathered what the Meiji government described as "controlled revolution" and had become a world power. It may be said that the chief reason why the nation modernized so rapidly and moved so smoothly into the modern international community was that Japan led the world in literacy, fostered by the hundreds of thousands of *terakoya* (local children's schools), which had flourished throughout the long period of peace of the Edo.

*The Boshin War: The end and the beginning of the Japanese sword.* In 1868 a government was formed under the direct control of the Emperor Meiji (r. 1866–1912). In January, a civil war, known as the Boshin War, broke out between the army of the former *bakufu* and the forces of the new imperial government. Western military tactics and weapons (fig. 1.21; see also cat. no. 133) were widely adopted, and guns were the main weaponry. Large quantities of old guns were sold by the Western powers to both sides of the conflict for a healthy profit. Of particular note was the Gatling gun, two of which were purchased by the Nagaoka clan, much to the distress of the new government army. Nevertheless, the new government won a decisive victory at the fortress of Goryōkaku in the port of Hakodate, in southern Hokkaidō, in large part because the *bakufu* troops generally carried old-fashioned matchlock and flintlock guns while the imperial forces were armed with percussion guns. At this point, the history of the Japanese sword as a weapon of war came to an end. Instead, it would become a symbol of samurai culture.

*Gendai-tō: Present-day swords.* In 1876 the Meiji government issued the *Haitō Rei* edict, whereby people other than soldiers or police were prohibited from wearing swords in public. Those who had upheld the feudal system had been dealt the final blow, and only those who were part of the new government were allowed to wear swords at all. This shocking step made it clear to the general populace that the government had been completely reformed.

After *Haitō Rei* was enforced, very few people ordered new swords, and most swordsmiths lost their livelihood. Emperor Meiji, however, was an ardent sword enthusiast. Concerned that the technology of sword-making might

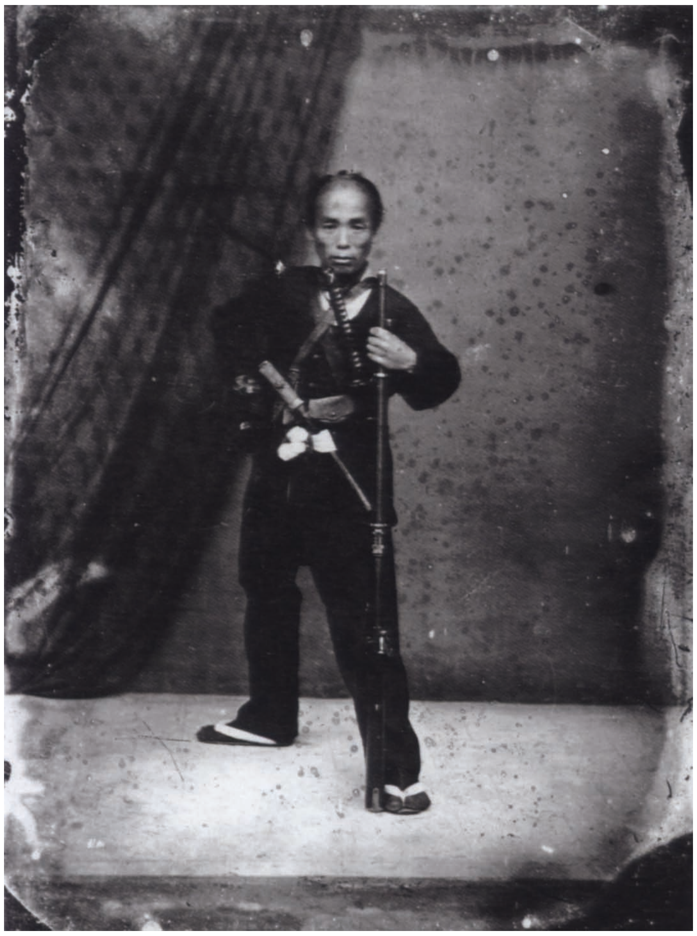


Fig. 1.21. Late-19th-century photograph showing the influence of Western arms and clothing on Japanese military styles

be lost, he appointed Gassan Sadakazu and Miyamoto Kanenori as *Teishitsu Gigei-In* ("imperial artists") and energetically promoted the preservation of sword-making technology.

The demand for army swords (*guntō*) gradually increased after 1935, and the number of active swordsmiths increased accordingly. However, their level of skill was not very high. At the end of World War II, the possession of swords was prohibited, and the swordsmiths once again lost their metier. But in 1953 it became possible to make swords, with the approval of the Bunkazai Hōgō Iinkai (Cultural Properties Preservation Committee), now the Bunkacho (Agency for Cultural Affairs). Today, swords that are accepted as art objects are given a registration certificate so that they may be owned by an individual.

In 1955, the Nippon Bijutsu Tōken Hozon Kyōkai (Society for the Preservation of the Japanese Art Sword) inaugurated a series of competitions to preserve and promote Japanese sword-making technology, and the swords made by award winners in recent years have been of a very high quality. In March 1958 Takahashi Sadatsugu was designated a Living National Treasure; he was followed by Miyairi Yukihira, Gassan Sadaichi, Sumitani Masamine, Amada Akitsugu, and Ōsumi Toshihira. There are at present more than two hundred swordsmiths authorized by the Bunkacho to make swords, which they do by studying old pieces and the way they were made. Indeed, many of today's smiths have produced works that are comparable to the great old swords.

## VI. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JAPANESE SWORD

### Manufacture

The chief material from which the Japanese sword is made is a steel known as *tama-hagane*, obtained by refining "sand iron," or *satetsu*. Technically speaking, steel with a carbon content of 0.04–1.7 percent is called *hagane* (steel); that with a lower carbon content is called *tetsu* (iron); and that with a higher carbon content is called *zuku* (pig iron). In general, however, this steel is referred to as *tetsu*. The iron-making operation itself is conducted by a number of people led by a chief engineer, known as the *murage*. (The Japanese government has appointed two such artisans as "Selected Possessors of Technology to Be Preserved," analogous to Associate Living National Treasures: Kihara Akira and Watanabe Katsuhiko.) These masters pile alternate layers of sand iron and wood charcoal into a rectangular furnace made of refractory clay, called the *tatara*, and supervise the heating of the furnace (fig. 1.22). The temperature of the furnace reaches about 1,300 degrees Celsius, and when the process is repeated continuously—over a period of three or four days and nights—the result is a large mass, or *kera*, of one to two tons of molten steel in the bottom of the furnace consisting of three types: *zuke*, *tetsu*, and *tama-hagane*.

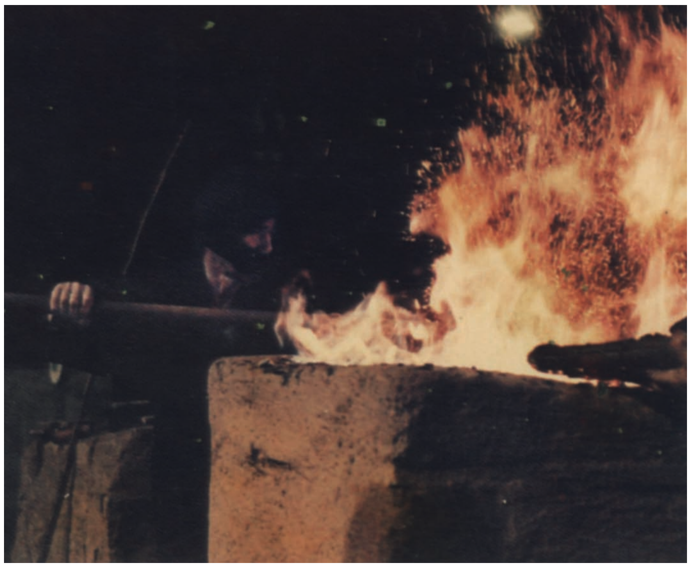


Fig. 1.22. *Tatara* furnace used to refine iron for a Japanese sword

The *tatara* furnace is then broken down, and the mass of steel is broken into pieces from among which are selected those pieces of high-quality *tama-hagane* with a carbon content of about 0.9–1.5 percent (fig. 1.23). In order to remove impurities such as phosphorous and sulfur, the swordsmith heats the *tama-hagane* in a charcoal fire to a temperature of about 1,300 degrees Celsius. He then puts it on an iron anvil known as a *kana-doko* and folds it over about a dozen times using a hammer known as an *ōzuchi* (fig. 1.24). To the *tama-hagane* are added pieces of *zuku oroshi-gane* (iron with a high carbon content) and *hōchō-testu* (low-carbon steel), and the process of heating, folding, and hammering is repeated between seven and ten times. (The total weight of *tama-hagane*, *zuku oroshi-gane*, and *hōchō-gane* needed to make a sword of about 70 centimeters in length is roughly

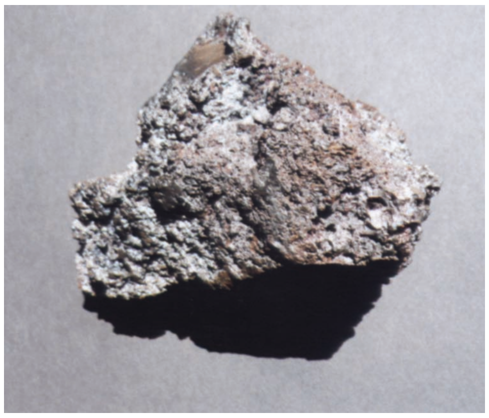


Fig. 1.23. Lump of *tama-hagane*, the raw material of a Japanese sword

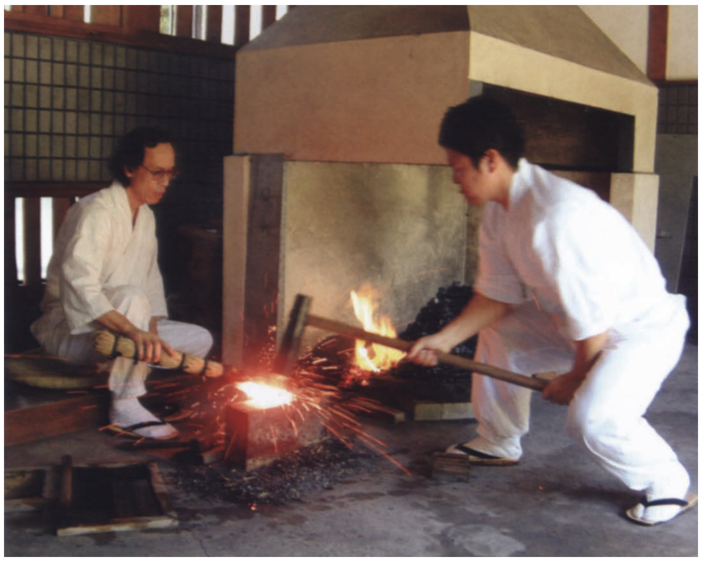


Fig. 1.24. Gassan Sadatoshi (left), master swordsmith, and his son, Sadanobu, forging a blade

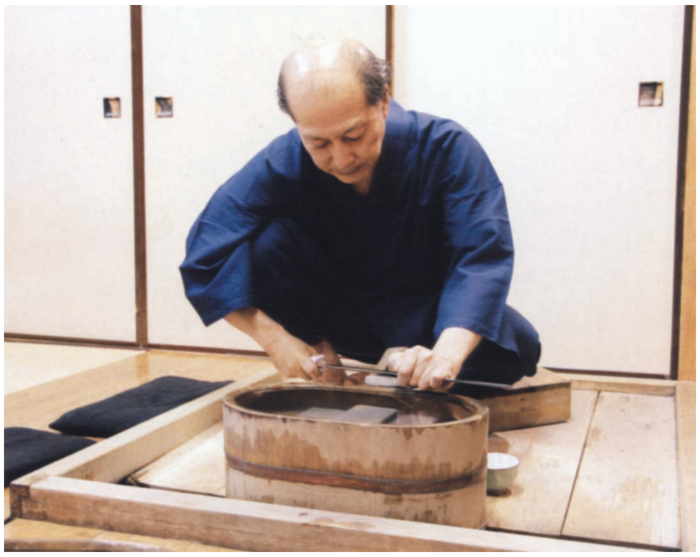


Fig. 1.25. Sword polisher Fujishiro Okisato

9.5 kilograms; once completed, the sword weighs about a tenth of that.) During this process, the carbon content drops to about 0.6–0.8 percent, forming a tough *kawagane*, or high-carbon "jacket" steel, that will be used to make the exterior of the blade. If the steel is folded fifteen times, there will be $2^{19}$ (or roughly 1,048,876) thin layers intimately forged together, resulting in toughness, resilience, and strength. Depending on how the *kawagane* is forged—by crossing the folds over vertically and horizontally, or by folding the steel in one direction—the folds will appear on the surface of the blade as one of a variety of grains, such as *jigane*, *itame*, *mokume*, or *masame*.

The *kawagane* is wrapped around a core of soft, low-carbon steel (0.1–0.2 percent) called the *shin-gane*, and the whole is beaten out close to the intended final shape of the sword. At this stage a curvature of about 60 percent of the final form is created. The blade is then coated overall with a clay slurry called *yakiba-tsuchi*, whose main constituents are a refractory clay and carbon (powdered charcoal). A thick layer of this slurry is applied to the body (*ji*) of the blade and a thin coating along the edge: a process called *tsuchi-dori*. After the clay has dried, the sword is heated to about 760–800 degrees Celsius, at which point it is quenched in water and the *sori* (curvature) originally conceived by the swordsmith is formed.

When an object is cut with a *chokutō* (straight sword), at the instant the blade makes a perpendicular impact on the object it imparts a strong shock to the hands. In the case of a curved sword that impact is diffused, and no such shock is transmitted even though the blade cuts equally well. Further, compared with blades of the *hira-zukuri* and *kiriha-zukuri* shapes, those of the *shinogi-zukuri* construction—which have a ridge, appropriate thickness in the blade section, and a sharper degree of angle—are more balanced, lighter to handle, and are altogether more efficient cutting weapons.

The *yakiba* (heat-treated section) comes in many rich variations of tempering patterns (*hamon*), such as *suguha* (straight) and *midare-ba* (small irregular patterns), depending on the manner in which the clay is applied in the *tsuchi-dori* process. The rapid cooling of the edge section changes the metallurgical properties of the steel and creates martensite and troostite, meaning that the steel will be very hard and take a sharp edge. In that process unique crystalline structures are formed: if the particles of martensite are diffuse, the effect is called *nioi*; if the particles are visible to the naked eye, they are called *nie*. The *ji* forms into a tough structure of ferrite (pure iron) mixed with austenite and pearlite, thus satisfying simultaneously the three requirements of a Japanese sword: that it will not break, will not bend, and will cut well.

The entire manufacturing process takes a period of some thirty days from start to finish. It then falls to the sword polisher (fig. 1.25) to reveal the other unique features that contribute to the beauty of the Japanese sword. In addition to shape and curvature, these include the *jihada* (steel surface texture), formed by the repeated folding of the combined *shin-gane* and *kawa-gane*, and the various types of *hamon* obtained through the processes of *tsuchi-dori* and quenching. First, several different types of stone are used to polish the blade and adjust its shape. Then, in order to reveal the refinement of the *jihada* and *hamon*, thin fragments of stone and finely powdered magnetite ore are applied with the fingertips in seven to eight stages, using smaller and smaller pieces, to perfect the polishing, a delicate process known as *shiage togi*. In all, for a sword of about

70 centimeters in length the polishing process takes about two weeks to complete.

The origin of the polishing process dates back as far as the Kofun period. A *kiriha-zukuri chokutō* from about the seventh century was excavated in 1939 from the Karadani *kofun* at Inashi-mura (Shimane Prefecture). The blade was in a good state of preservation and the bright surface showed polishing marks indicative of the *nagurato* stone used today in the fourth stage of polishing. At present, the sword polisher Nagayama Kokan, who has been designated a Living National Treasure, is one of some three hundred polishers who work to preserve the unique art object that is the Japanese sword.

If the Japanese sword can be likened to a picture, it would relate aesthetically to the black ink paintings known as *suiboku-ga*. The bright and dark (青黒), clearly polished *jigane* would be analogous to the paper, and the *yakiba*, with the appearance of white blossoming flowers, for example, would represent how the black ink is said to display "five colors," meaning the impression of color derived through variations in tone. In order to preserve this essential beauty and carry the polished sword, a scabbard of soft wood is made to contain the blade. To strengthen the scabbard, and to protect the blade against humidity, the scabbard is covered overall with lacquer. The other components of a sword mounting (discussed more fully in the essay titled "Sword Mountings and Fittings" in this volume) include a hilt (*tsuka*), whereby the sword is gripped in the hands, which is typically wrapped with rayskin and bound with cords or leather to protect it from fracture under violent impact. The ends of the wooden portions of the scabbard are protected by metal fittings, and a *tsuba* (sword guard) is attached, protecting the palms of the hands and aiding adjustments to the overall balance. Accordingly, the Japanese sword can be said to represent the essence of several traditional crafts and fine arts represented by three specialist groups: swordsmiths, polishers, and the makers of sword mountings and fittings.

### Authentication

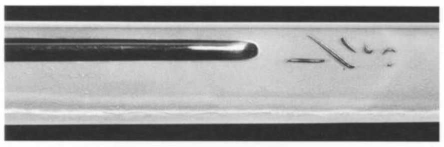
Before the Meiji era, when swords were still used as practical weapons of war, a fine blade was so esteemed that a samurai would make virtually any sacrifice in order to obtain a great sword that would protect him on the battlefield. The sword—often called the "spirit of the samurai"—was also the most coveted of gifts, to be given or exchanged on auspicious occasions and special events. In addition, after victory in battle generals often presented renowned swords to their commanders who had achieved military success, regarded as the highest honor by the recipient (see cat. nos. 79, 120). Indeed, just one superior sword conveyed more meaning, and more prestige, than gifts of large domains or any quantity of gold, silver, paintings, and other treasures.

The following is one example illustrating the scope of the samurai's obsession with swords. It concerns the *tachi* named "Ikkoku Kanemitsu" (One Province Kanemitsu) in the possession of the family of Duke Yamanouchi, formerly lords of Tosa *han*, which is designated an Important Cultural Property. In the early Edo period, this sword, by Bizen Kanemitsu, was highly reputed as a very great sword indeed. Having heard of it, Tokugawa Yorinobu, son of Tokugawa Ieyasu and the ancestor-founder of the Kishū Tokugawa family, asked Tōdō Takatora, a famous general under Ieyasu, to obtain the sword for him from the Yamanouchi family. The story goes that Yamanouchi Tadayoshi refused the request, to which Tōdō Takatora replied, "Even though you say that, if it were a command of the shogun you would have to give up the sword." Tadayoshi countered, saying that he "would return the whole province of Tosa"—an area covering the whole of present-day Kōchi Prefecture and nearly priceless in value—but would "never part with the great sword by Kanemitsu."

Swords made by famous smiths were, accordingly, extremely difficult to obtain, and for that reason fakes purporting to be the work of famous smiths have been made even since ancient times. In the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi* (cat. no. 211)—a 1423 copy of a Kamakura-period treatise on swords, kept in the Kyōo Gukoku-ji, Kyōto—it is recorded that cleverly made fakes of blades by the early Kamakura-period swordsmith Bungo no Kuni Yukihira were in circulation, and it explains how the fakes could be recognized. In another instance, there were apparently so many blades purported to be the work of the famous seventeenth-century smith Kotetsu (see cat. no. 105), it was often said that if you see one hundred swords with his signature then without doubt you have seen one hundred fakes.

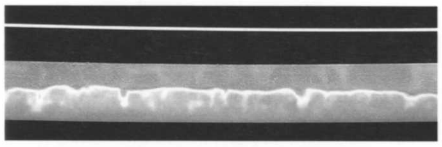
The authentication of a Japanese sword is a complex process of judgment and connoisseurship based on several criteria. The first criterion is the shape of the blade—whether the curvature is deep or shallow, the *bōshi* large or small—what in human terms would be the equivalent of a specific kind of "physique," which can help determine the general period of manufacture. In this regard, particular reference should be made to the earlier sections of this essay where the changing styles and shapes of the Japanese sword are discussed in historical context.

*Opposite*: Fig. 1.26. Types of tempering patterns (*hamon*). Photographs by Fujishiro Okisato a



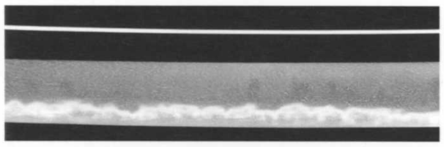
*hoso-suguha* (*nioi*) with *bō-utsuri*

b



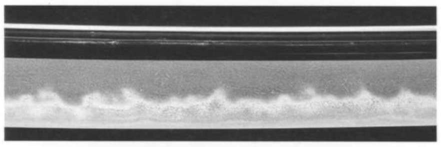
*kataochi-gunome* with *ashi* and *yō* (*nioi*) and *midare-utsuri*

c



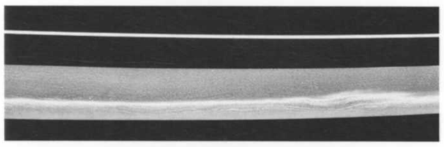
*ko-midare* (*nie*) with *jifu*

d



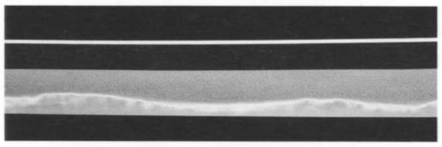
*ō-midare* with *ara-nie* (*nie*) and *jifu*

e



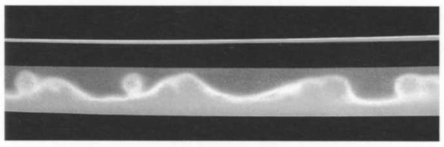
*futo-suguha* (*nie*) with *kuichigai-ba* and *sunagashi*

f



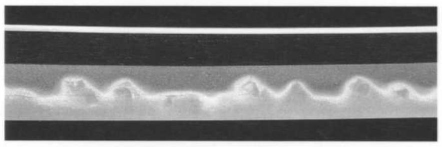
*ko-notare* (*nie*) and *ko-itame*

g



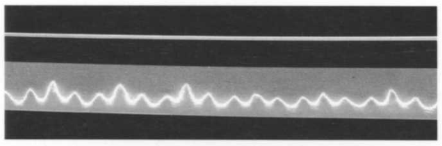
*tōran-ba* (*nioi*) and *nashiji-hada*

h



*ō-gunome* (*nie*)

i



*sanbon-sugi* (*nie*)

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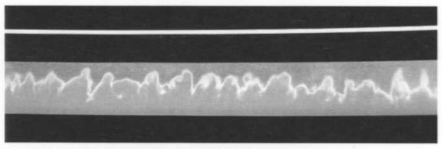
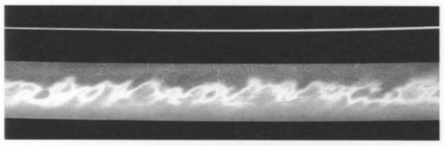


*chōji-midare* with *togari-chōji* (*nioi*) and with *ashi* and *yō*

k



*saka-chōji* (*nie*) and *ō-itame*

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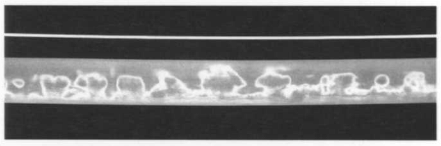
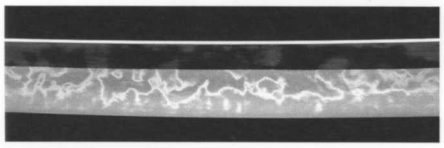


*kawazuko-chōji* with *tobiyaki* (*nie* mixed with *nioi*)

m



*hitatsura* (*nie*) with *ashi* and *yō*

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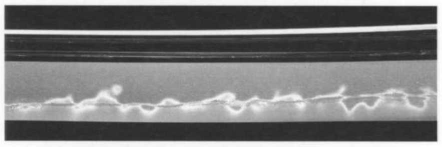
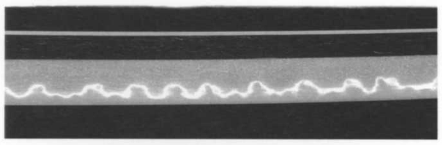


*togari-gunome* with *nijū-ba* and *sunagashi* (*nie* and *ara-nie*)

o



*gunome-midare* (*nie*) and *ō-itame*

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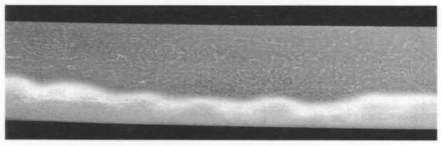
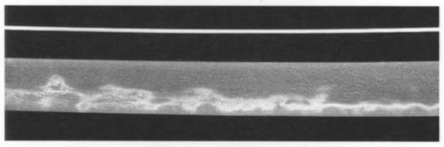


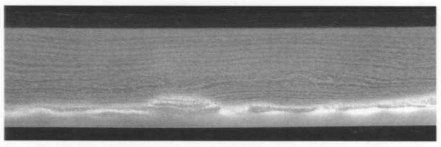
*ō-notare* (*nioi*) and *itame* with *mokume*

q



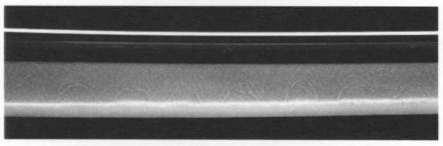
*notare* with *togari-gunome* (*nie* and *ara-nie*) and *itame-nagareru*

r



*suguha* with *notare* (*nie* with *sunagashi*) and *masame*

s



*chū-suguha* (*nie*) and *ayasugi-hada*

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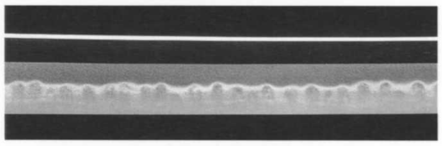
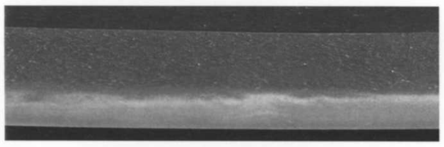


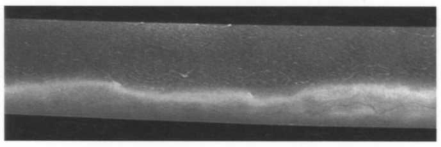
*ko-chōji* and *nashiji-hada*

u



*futo-suguha* with *hotsure* (*nie*) and *ko-itame* with *chikei*

v



*notare* with *sunagashi* and *kinsuji*, *itame* with *mokume* and *chikei*

The second criterion is the tempering pattern (*hamon*), from which the school and, possibly, the individual smith can be identified. The *hamon* is the pattern that emerges at the boundary of the *ji* and the *ha* areas of the blade (between the sharp edge and the ridge line) as an artifact of the *tsuchidori* and quenching processes (fig. 1.26). There are two basic types of *hamon*: *suguha* (straight) and *midare-ba* (irregular), either comprising the crystalline structures known as *nie* or *nioi*, described above. In terms of appearance, *nioi* in the *hamon* can be compared to a fine accumulation of powdery snow, whereas *nie* appears as coarse, recrystallized snow. The *suguha hamon* is subdivided into three types: *hoso-suguha* (narrow), *chū-suguha* (medium), and *futo-*(or *hiro*)*-suguha* (wide); in addition, a particularly narrow *suguha* is called *ito-suguha* ("thread" *suguha*). Because the *suguha* has been used in every period of Japanese history—from Kofun *chokutō* to modern swords—it is very difficult to appraise. *Midare-ba* refers to several different types of irregular tempering patterns, including *ko-midare* (compact irregular), *ō-midare* (large irregular), *ko-chōji* (compact clove shapes), *juka-chōji* (multiple *chōji*), *saka-chōji* (oblique *chōji*, slanting toward the tang), *gunome* (waves), *kataochi-gunome* (sawtooth-shaped variations of *gunome*), *togari-gunome* (pointed *gunome*), *gunome-chōji*, *sanbon-sugi* (zigzag lines in clusters of three), *ō-notare* (large undulations), *ko-notare* (small undulations), *gunome-majiri* (mixed with *gunome*), *hitatsura* (tempering effects shown across the blade), *juzuba* (stringed, beadlike patterns), *tōran-ba* (wild or "stormy" curves resembling ocean waves), *sudare-ba* (striations resembling a bamboo shade), *kobushigata-chōji* (fist-shaped *chōji*), and *hako-midare* (a box- or square-shaped pattern).

From the middle Heian through the early Kamakura period, *hamon* often were *ko-midare* and *ko-chōji* with *nie*. Through the middle Kamakura period, *chōji* and *juka-chōji* patterns were made, and from that time on there were *hamon* of both *nie* and *nioi*. Beginning in the late Kamakura period, *gunome*, *kataochi-gunome*, *togari-gunome*, *gunome-chōji*, *ō-notare*, and *ko-notare* appeared, all of which are seen in Nanbokuchō- and Muromachi-period works in addition to *hitatsura*. As of the late Muromachi period, *sanbon-sugi*, *hitatsura*, *gunome*, and *gunome-chōji* became the major styles of tempering patterns, while the Momoyama period saw *ō-notare*, *ko-notare*, and *ō-midare* become popular. In the Edo period, the *juzuba*, *tōran-ba*, and *sudare-ba* patterns were devised; *chōji*, *kobushigata-chōji*, and *gunome-chōji* were also used. In the *shinshintō* era, during the Bakumatsu (the final years of the shogunate), there were *hamon* of *ko-notare*, *ō-notare*, *hitatsura*, *tōran-ba*, and *kobushigata-chōji*. Each type of *hamon* is sometimes seen as a reflection of the natural landscape of the region where a particular swordsmith lived. Judging from these patterns, and combined with knowledge of the *hamon* dominant in each historic period, it becomes possible to discern not only the time frame but the lineage and sometimes the identity of the smith.

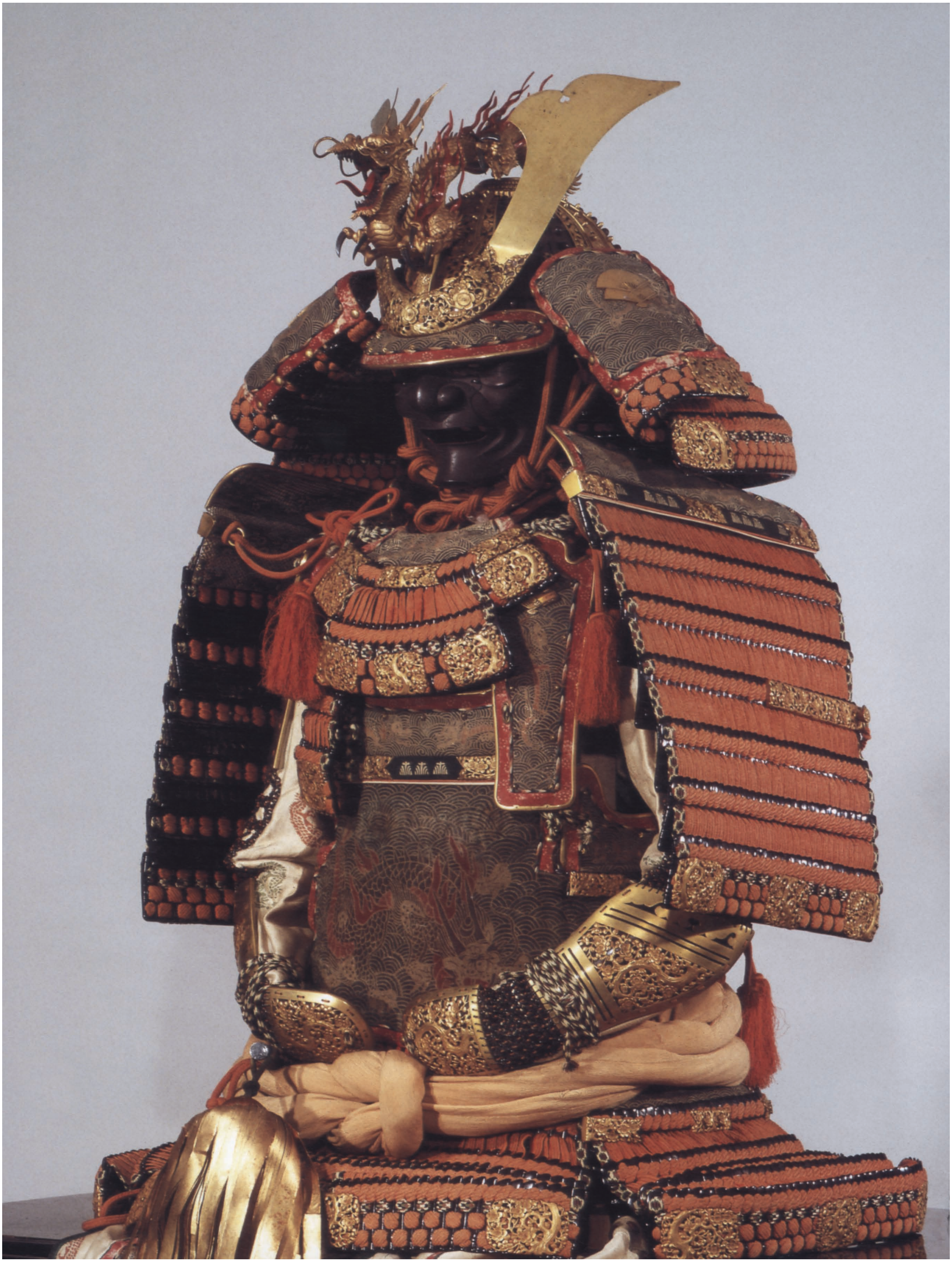
The third criterion for authentication is the *jigane* (steel surface texture). It is not possible to make a strong and hard blade with a beautiful *hamon* without a good *jigane*, which can help determine whether the sword is of good or poor quality, or if it is a *kotō* or *shintō* (old or new) piece. In instances where the *jigane* has notable characteristics, it can also help identify the school or an individual smith. The variable appearance of the *jigane* is the result of differences in the raw materials used in each period and in each region of manufacture; also, since each school (流派) and lineage (系統) generally used different methods of forging to produce the *jigane*, the *jihada* formed (the polished surface texture) will have particular characteristics. Typical grain patterns include *itame-hada* (wood grain), *mokume-hada* (burl grain), and *matsukawa-hada* (a grain with abundant *chikei*, described below, that resembles pine-tree bark). Other types of *jigane* include *ō-itame hada* (large *itame*), *ko-itame hada* (small *itame*), *ayasugi-hada* (concentrically curved grain), *nashiji-hada* (a pearskinlike, densely grained, uniform steel surface texture), *konuka-hada* (a very fine, dense grain formation named after rice powder), and *muji-hada* (or "*kagami-tetsu*," in which the steel has no texture and is clear and plain like a mirror surface). In addition to these patterns, other variations in the appearance of the steel texture include *chikei* (bright, shining, short curvy lines in the *ji*, called *kinsuji* when they appear in the *ha*), *utsuri* (literally "reflection," a band of "misty" appearance that runs parallel to the *hamon*), and *ji-nie* (*nie* present in the *ji* section of the blade).

The fourth criterion comprises the shape and other characteristics of the *bōshi* (point section). Although any one smith was capable of making swords with different types of *hamon*, the configuration of the *yakiba* at the *bōshi* seldom varies. It is also important to consider the size of the *bōshi*, and the form of the *hamon* on it carries considerable weight in the appraisal of a sword. If we think of the *bōshi* in terms of the human visage, it is similar to the relation between the shape of the face and the hairstyle. Broadly speaking, the types of *bōshi* are: *ko-gissaki* (small point section), *chū-gissaki* (medium point section), *ō-gissaki* (large point section), and *ikubi-gissaki* (a point section that is short compared to the length of the blade, often called a "boar's head" point because of its resemblance to the proportions of a boar's stubby head compared to its large body). The types of *hamon* on *bōshi* include *yaki-zume* (stops at the back without a turnback), *ō-maru* (rounded in a large semicircle at the tip), *ko-maru* (rounded in a small semicircle at the tip), *notare-komi* (wavy and curved, continuing from the cutting section), *haki-kake* (multiple tempering lines, like the tracings of a broom on sand, similar to *sunagashi*, the patterns of "drifting sand" in the cutting section), *midare-komi* (continuation of an irregular pattern in the cutting section), *Jizō* (round and head-shaped, like the profile of a Buddhist stone figure standing by the road in the country [*Jizō*]), *kaen* (grain formations like flames), and *ichi-mai* (with no *hamon* on the point because the heat treatment affected the entire area).

By considering these criteria, it is possible to deduce statistically the period, school, and smith. Having appraised the blade, one then examines the tang in detail, including the overall shape, the tip, the *yasurime* (file marks), the color of the rust, the method of engraving the inscription, the position of the inscription, and the *mekugi-ana* (the rivet hole, or holes, through which a retaining peg, or *mekugi*, is inserted). It is particularly difficult to distinguish between genuine and fake signatures. While research into swords has advanced significantly in recent years, sword counterfeiters and signature forgers have had access to this information and have used it to develop new methods of engraving fake signatures, so that even experts with advanced powers of judgment can occasionally make a mistake. For example, it is said that following the publication of the discovery that on genuine swords by Suishinshi Masahide there is always one file cut deeper than the others just below the *keshō-yasuri*—various decorative file marks chiseled close to the *machi* and found only on *shintō* and *shinshintō* blades—counterfeiters invariably included such a file mark on their fakes.

Having duly considered all of these various points, one must bear in mind that these are general criteria and that there are always exceptions to the rules. After increasing one's depth of knowledge and power of judgment by examining many standard swords and famous swords alike, the techniques described above can be applied to unsigned blades so that it is possible to judge the maker with accuracy. It should be noted that in the practice of sword connoisseurship, one should study only good, standard pieces until your "eye" has reached a certain level of skill. From then on, you should, as far as is possible, study only great swords. Only through firsthand knowledge of the greatest swords will you be able to judge lower-rank pieces: by studying genuine and fake swords, and great and poor swords, all together, one never develops the necessary power of judgment.

Let us look at a practical example of how to authenticate a Japanese sword, in this case a *tantō* (cat. no. 82). It has no curvature, equivalent to the late-Kamakura-period shape (see fig. 1.10a). The *hamon* is *suguha* and can be compared closely to the *suguha hotsure* ("frayed" *suguha*) *hamon* in figure 1.26s. The *jigane*, a prominent *masame* grain, matches the *masame* in figure 1.26r. The *bōshi* is in the *haki-kake* style. If we consider all these factors together, it can be determined that the *tantō* is by one of the Hōshō school smiths and was made in the Kamakura period.



**IKEDA HIROSHI**

# JAPANESE ARMOR: AN OVERVIEW

## HISTORY AND TYPES

Japanese armor, among the most colorful in the world, possesses a refined beauty that is enhanced by its combination of sophisticated techniques and rarefied materials, which range from wrought iron, leather, lacquer, and silk to nonferrous and precious metals and dyed textiles. Historical records describe two types of body armor in use in Japan before the eighth century A.D. The first, assembled from iron plates, is called *tankō* and has been excavated from tombs of the Kofun period (ca. 3rd–7th century A.D.) (see, e.g., cat. no. 2). The second type, known as *keikō* (fig. 2.2), is a flexible armor composed of small leather or iron plates (*sane*) linked together with cord. Two kinds of helmets (*kabuto*) have also been excavated from this period: *shōkakutsuki kabuto*, with a sharp projection at the front resembling the prow of a ship (fig. 2.3), and *mabizashi tsuki kabuto*, with a quarter-moon-shaped brim at the front. Beginning in the Heian period (794–1185), Japanese armor was invariably based on the *keikō* model, including such well-known types as the *yoroi*, *dō-maru*, *hara-ate*, and *tōsei gusoku*, discussed below.

In the Nara period (710–794), the manufacture and storage of armor were the prerogative of the state and were regulated under the *Ritsuryō-sei*, the Japanese legal code modeled on that of Tang-dynasty China. During the decline of that system, from about the tenth to late twelfth century, armor came to be commissioned and kept by private individuals. Concomitant with this shift, the growing power of the military class (*bushi*) resulted in numerous alterations in Japanese armor that were designed to accommodate contemporary modes of warfare. This led to the development of two important armor types: *yoroi*, suitable for archers on horseback, and *haramaki*, intended for use by infantry.

The *yoroi*, a form of armor unique to Japan (see, e.g., cat. no. 3), generally comprises a *dō* (cuirass) made of *sane* interconnected by lacing (*odoshi*). The *dō* wraps around the torso, covering the front, left side, and back; this continuous portion is referred to as the *kabuki-dō*. The right side of the wearer is protected by a separate side piece made of iron and leather (*waidate*) that is attached to the body by silk cords before the *kabuki-dō* is put on. Large iron plates (*kanagu mawari*) are attached to the *dō*, including the *mae-tateage* at the top of the breast and the *ushiro-tateage* at the top of the back. (See the separate discussions of *sane*, *odoshi*, and *kanagu mawari* at the end of this essay.) A skirt (*kusazuri*) composed of four sections (*ken*)—at the front, back, and left and on the *waidate* at the right—spreads out broadly from the bottom of the *dō* to protect the upper thighs when the wearer is on horseback. The front of the *dō* is covered with a leather facing called the *tsurubashiri* ("bowstring path"), which is intended to prevent the warrior's bowstring from catching on the scales of the *dō* when he shoots at the enemy. To increase comfort and facilitate movement, the upper section of the *ushiro-tateage* includes a plate called the *saka-ita* ("reverse plate"), laced so that it overlaps the plate beneath it, contrary to usual practice. Two plates made of *sane* protect the gap between the edge of the breastplate and the shoulder guards, or *sode*: on the right, the *sendan-no-ita* and, on the left, the *kyūbi-no-ita* (fig. 2.4). The set is completed by a helmet (*kabuto*), whose components include the bowl (*hachi*, or *bachi*) and the neck guard (*shikoro*), the latter laced in the *kebiki odoshi* style (see discussion of lacings below).

Fig. 2.1. Detail of *yoroi* armor with red lacing (cat. no. 25)

The bowls of Heian-period helmets, which developed out of the *shōkakutsuki kabuto*, are composed of five to ten trapezoidal iron plates arranged in a hemispheric shape and joined together with conical rivets known as *hoshi* ("stars"), from which derives the name for this type of helmet bowl: the *hoshi-bachi*. At the crown of the bowl is the *tehen no ana*, in ancient helmets a hole through which the wearer's hair could be passed; in later helmets *tehen* refers simply to the crown or apex of the bowl. At the front ends of the *shikoro*, on either side of the face, are two sections that are turned back, known as the *fukigaeshi*, which was primarily intended to protect the face against arrows shot from the side. Such helmets are often described or referred to by the number of iron plates used to make the bowl or by the number of spaces (*ken*) between the joints of the plates.

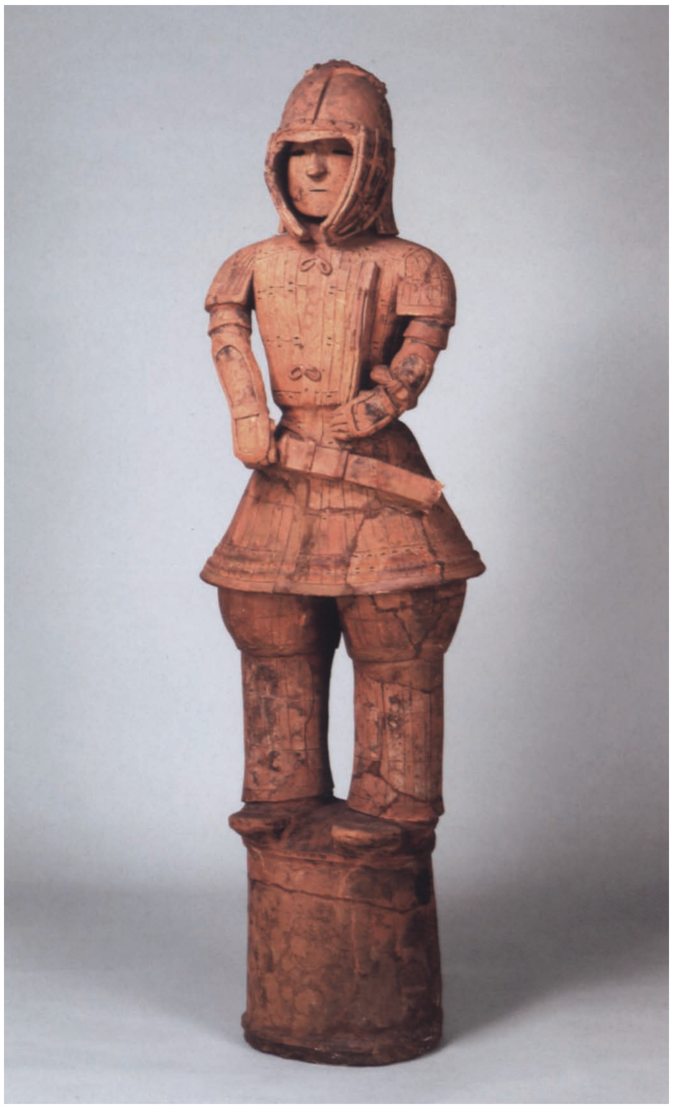
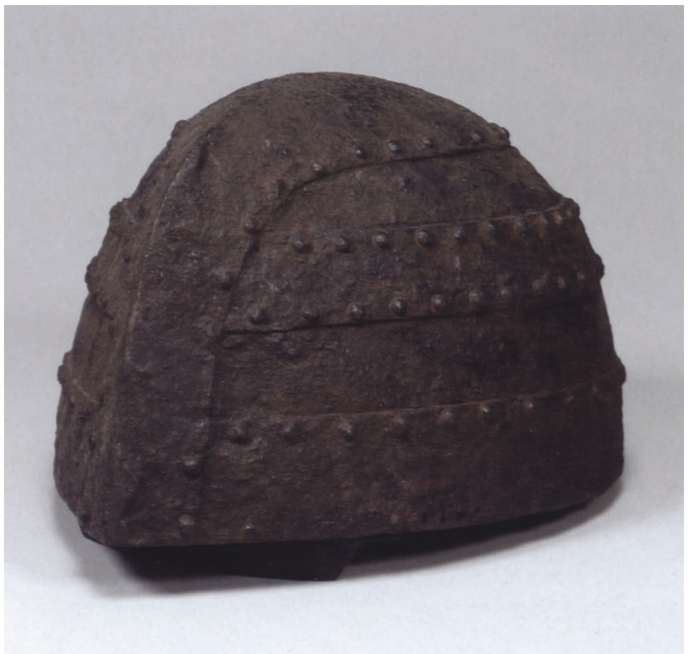


Fig. 2.2. *Haniwa* (unglazed terracotta figure) of a warrior wearing *keikō* armor, Kofun period, 6th century. Tokyo National Museum (National Treasure)

Fig. 2.3. *Shōkakutsuki kabuto* (helmet), Kofun period, 5th century. Tokyo National Museum (National Treasure)



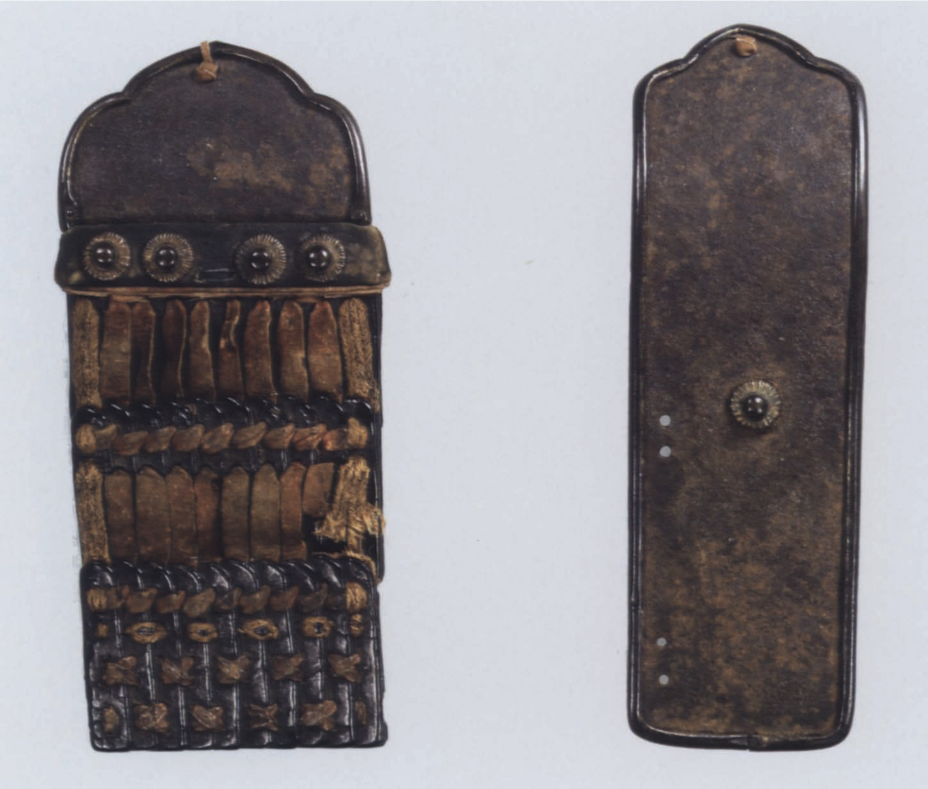


Fig. 2.4. *Sendan-no-ita* and *kyūbi-no-ita* (pieces protecting the gap between the shoulder and chest) from *yoroi* armor with red-leather lacing (cat. no. 3)

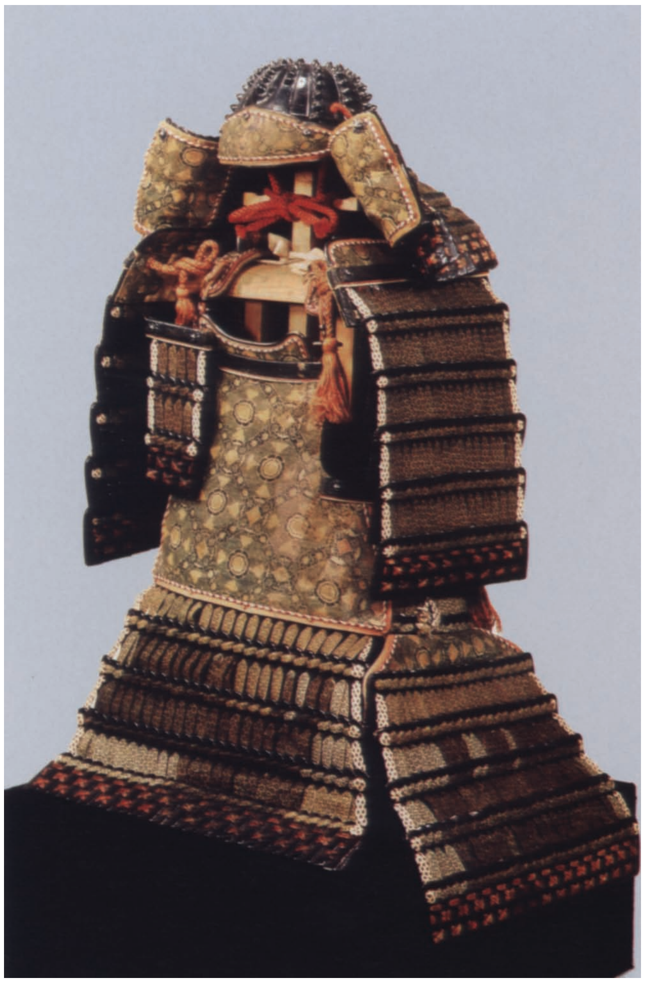


Fig. 2.5. *Yoroi* armor known as the *kozakura gawa kigaeshi odoshi no yoroi*, late 12th century. Itsukushima-jinja Shrine, Miyajima Island

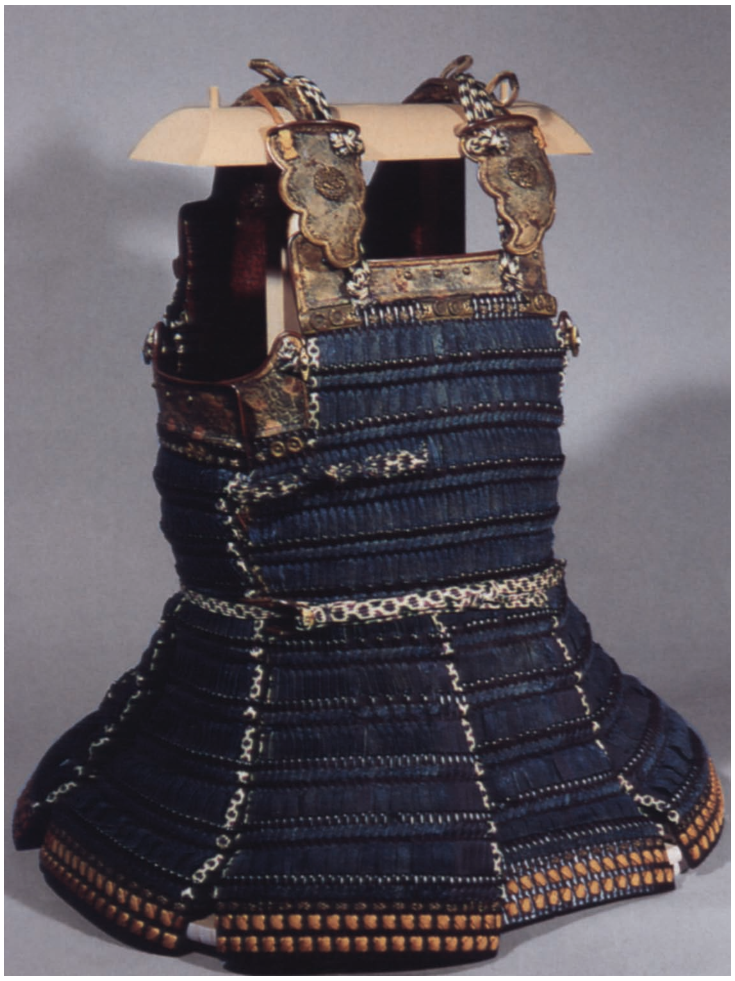


Fig. 2.6. *Dō-maru* armor, 15th century. Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama Prefecture

The basic *yoroi* is today often referred to as the *ō-yoroi* ("great" *yoroi*) because it usually has larger components and is better equipped than *haramaki* and other types of Japanese armor. The *ō-yoroi* reached the height of its development during the Heian period and the Kamakura period (1185–1333), when warfare in Japan was dominated by mounted archers. Famous *ō-yoroi* from this time include two examples from the late twelfth century—both officially designated National Treasures—housed in Shinto shrines: the *kozakura gawa kigaeshi odoshi no yoroi* in the Itsukushima-jinja, Miyajima Island (fig. 2.5) and the *kon ito odoshi no yoroi* in the Oyamazumi-jinja (Ishikawa Prefecture).

From the Nanbokuchō period (1336–1392) to the Muromachi period (1392–1573), warfare in Japan came to be increasingly centered on combat with swords, in particular *tachi* and *uchigatana*, and on staff weapons with short, sword-like blades, known as *naginata*. The large, elaborate forms of *ō-yoroi* were replaced with more compact, tight-waisted armors such as *haramaki* and *dō-maru*, which were better suited to battle on foot. The *ō-yoroi* eventually evolved into a ceremonial armor worn by the shogun and his companions for travel and for ritual use in festivals.

The *haramaki* and *dō-maru*, similar forms of light armor originally designed for infantry, differ only in the manner in which they are closed around the body. The *dō-maru* opens down the wearer's right side (fig. 2.6), while the *haramaki* opens down the center of the back (see cat. no. 9). In the Muromachi period, *bushi* made adaptations to both armors, as they had to *ō-yoroi*, and augmented them with *kabuto* and *sode*. Their changes can be seen in the *dō-maru* with dark blue lacing in the Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama (cat. no. 6) and one in the Matsura History Museum, Hirado (Nagasaki Prefecture)—known as a *kon ito odoshi katashiro akadōmaru*—both of which open down the right side in classic *dō-maru* fashion and are equipped with matching *kabuto* and *sode*. Similarly, the *haramaki* armor with multicolored lacing at Sata-jinja, a shrine in Izumo (Shimane Prefecture) (cat. no. 8), opens down the back and is equipped with *kabuto* and *sode*. The simplest form of armor, worn by *bushi* of the lowest classes, is known as *hara-ate* and consists of a plate covering only the front of the torso (fig. 2.7).

A helmet type known as *suji-kabuto* was introduced during the Nanbokuchō and Muromachi periods for use with *haramaki*, *dō-maru*, and, rarely, *ō-yoroi*. Its bowl (*suji-bachi*) employs flat-headed rivets (which are flush with the surface and nearly indiscernible) in place of the conical *hoshi*. The term "*suji*" refers to the ridges along the edges of the plates, the helmet's most prominent feature. Its neck guard is also flattened into what is called a *kasa-jikoro* (or "umbrella" *shikoro*) after its resemblance to the shape of a traditional Japanese hat. Other changes in the form of *kabuto* at this time include the addition of *kuwagata* (flat, decorative "antlers" or stylized horns) and *maedate* (frontal crests) in various shapes, including the *riken* (a double-edged sword that is a Buddhist symbol), the quarter moon, and the sun.

In the sixteenth century, warfare in Japan evolved once again, from encounters between hundreds of combatants to organized battles between thousands of foot soldiers. The *yari*, a thrusting and cutting spear, was adopted, and at mid-century, firearms based on European examples became decisive factors in battle, particularly in those of the Tenshō era (1573–92). Indeed, firearms were the pivotal weapons used at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and at the siege of Ōsaka Castle (1614–15), both key victories that helped consolidate the power of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616). As the demand for armor increased, sets were sometimes constructed using older components. These "recycled" armors are known as *shikaeshi mono*. In addition, simple, inexpensive helmet bowls were made, including the *kensu*, a roughly made form of *suji-kabuto*; the *shii-nari* ("acorn" shape), with its prominent *tehen*; and the so-called *zunari* ("head-shaped") bowl made of three iron plates—one at the center and one on either side—in a type of construction known as *sanmaibari*. Conversely, elaborate forms of purely decorative helmets, known as *kawari-kabuto*, also became popular. Appended to these were various fixtures, from animal hair to three-dimensional representations of mountainous landscapes, animals, and other objects. Yet another helmet type made at this time, the *hineno nari*, is characterized by a neck guard that is shorter on the sides than in the back. The great diversity of helmet types and decorations during this period is probably the result of a rising awareness of the symbolic potency of the *kabuto* in the midst of mass armed conflict.

Increasing demand for armor and the adoption of the gun and spear brought about substantial changes in the form of the *dō*, the most notable of which was the use of large plates of hammered iron instead of *sane*. Another important change was the development of a simple *dō* consisting of riveted plates that close on the right side, to which *ko-gusoku* ("small equipment") was added, including face covers (*mengu*), sleeves (*kote*), thigh guards (*haidate*), and shin defenses (*sune-ate*). The *kote* (see cat. no. 4) and *haidate* are composed of *sane* and iron mesh (*kusari*) sewn onto an undercloth known as *ieji*. When completed in this fashion, such armor was often referred to as *gusoku* ("full equipment," meaning a complete set), and in the late Muromachi period it came to be known as *tōsei gusoku* ("equipment of the times") to distinguish it from the earlier *haramaki* and *dō-maru*.

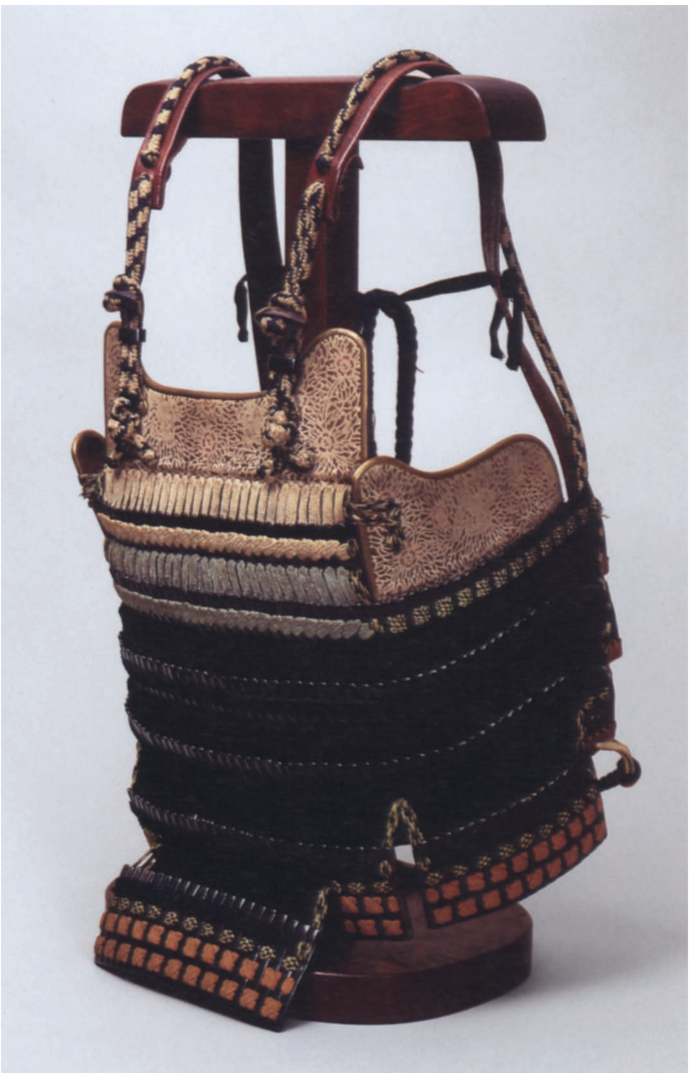


Fig. 2.7. *Hara-ate* armor, Edo period, 19th century. Kokugakuin High School, Tokyo

From several extant examples of *tōsei gusoku* we know that such armors were worn not only by common samurai but also by high-ranking military commanders, and that evolutions in helmet fashion occured slightly earlier than those in the rest of the armor. Important examples include an armor that belonged to Tokugawa Ieyasu (known as *iyozane kuro ito odoshi dō-maru no gusoku*), now in the Kumanosan Tōshōgū, a shrine in Wakayama Prefecture; the *kuro ito* *odoshi dō-maru gusoku* (now in a private collection) that was once owned by Honda Tadakatsu (1548–1610); the *kuro ito odoshi nimai-dō gusoku* in the Tokyo National Museum, once owned by Sakakibara Yasumasa (1548–1606); and the *kon ito odoshi gomai-dō gusoku* in the Sendai City Museum, originally owned by Date Masamune (1567–1636) (cat. no. 13).

In the Edo period (1603–1867), armor became a symbol of family lineage that was employed by successive generations of shoguns and feudal lords—including the Tokugawa shogun and the daimyo of Ii, Kuroda, Date, and Honda, among others. These families commissioned armors made in the style of the *gusoku* originally worn by their ancestors (see, e.g., cat. no. 12). Many of the *tōsei gusoku* made at this time reflect the highest levels of craftsmanship, including splendid helmets that range from the true *suji-bachi* to unusual *kawari-kabuto*, some with strikingly naturalistic representations.

The historical revivalism of the late Edo period—an outgrowth of Japan's isolation and introspection after the Tokugawa shogunate closed the country to outsiders—greatly influenced the design of weapons and other military equipment, including armor. Enlightened by books describing and illustrating traditional forms, which were unfamiliar to many Edo-period samurai and daimyo, armorers crafted imitations of the old sets, notably *yoroi*, until the end of the Bakumatsu (1853–57), the final phase of the Tokugawa shogunate.

## ARMOR CONSTRUCTION

The basic components of Japanese armor, as discussed above and outlined below, are *sane* (small plates), *odoshi* (lacing), and *kanagu mawari* (large iron components).

### SANE

These small leather or iron plates, the "building blocks" of Japanese armor, are slender and oblong in form, with a triangular (*yamagata*, or "mountain shaped") profile at the top. Each *sane* is usually pierced with thirteen holes in two vertical rows. The individual plates are linked together by thin leather cords (*shita-toji*) threaded through the bottom eight holes to form horizontal rows that overlap from left to right. Other types include *sane* with nineteen holes arranged in three rows and those with fourteen holes in two overlapping rows, known as *iyozane* after Iyo province (present-day Ehime Prefecture), where the style originated. The horizontal rows are then lacquered to form rigid strips, or *sane-ita* (fig. 2.8), which were then joined with lacing (see below). A *yoroi*-type armor was typically constructed with *sane* made of ox leather (*kawazane*) that was hardened by hammering; the armor was then supplemented with iron *sane* at the front and on the sides, areas of the body particularly vulnerable to attack. Strips of alternating leather and iron *sane* are called *ichimaimaze*.

Over time, as armor grew lighter, *sane* became thinner and narrower. For example, the *sane* in the twelfth-century *kozakura gawa kigaeshi odoshi no yoroi* (or "small cherry-yellow replacement-laced armor") in the Itsukushima-jinja, Miyajima Island (fig. 2.5), are 8 centimeters long and 4.5 to 4.8 centimeters wide. (The term "*kigaeshi*" in the descriptive name of the armor refers to a method of coloring leather by first dyeing it in blue and white sections and then dyeing it yellow, so that the resulting colors are yellow and green.) By comparison, the *sane* on a fourteenth-century armor—the *shiro ito tsumadori odoshi no yoroi* in the Kushibiki-hachimangū, Hachinohe (Aomori Prefecture) (cat. no. 5)—are 6.1 centimeters long and 1.5 centimeters wide. (Here *tsumadori*

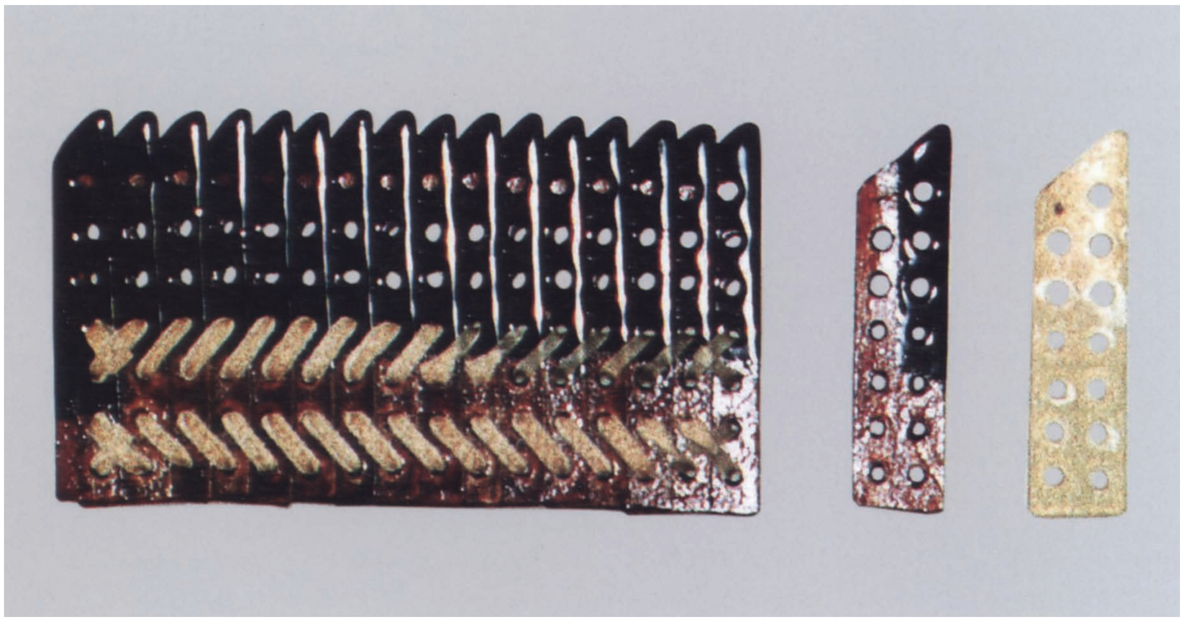


Fig. 2.8. Modern replica *sane* (plates) showing (from right to left): an individual *sane*; a partially lacquered *sane*; and *sane* laced together to form *sane-ita*, the strips from which armor was constructed

refers to a method of decorating the edges of shoulder guards and skirts in a triangular array of contrasting colors.) The smaller, thinner plates are known as *kozane* ("small *sane*"). A typical armor comprises between one and two thousand *sane*, depending on the size of the individual plates.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, *sane-ita* were made from a single wide sheet of iron and were referred to as *itazane* ("*ita*" means "one sheet"). This form, which was easier to make and more economical, was used in most *tōsei gusoku*. *Itazane* with a straight top edge are called *ichimonji gashira itazane*, while those with a sawtooth profile along the top edge, in imitation of traditional *sane*, are called *kittsukezane*. Straight-edged *itazane* were used more frequently on the *shikoro* (neck guard) because of their size and configuration.

### *ODOSHI*

The lacings that were threaded through the top three holes of each *sane* to link rows of *sane-ita* together are known collectively as *odoshi-ito*, a term that probably derives from the words "*himo*" (lacing) and "*tōshi*" (to thread). They were made of leather, silk, and (rarely) cotton or hemp and in a variety of colors, from red silk (*aka-ito odoshi*) to black leather (*kurokawa odoshi*). There are numerous styles and variations of *odoshi*. In some armors, the *sane-ita* are laced closely together and are said to resemble hair arranged with a comb; this style is known as *kebiki odoshi*, or "close lacing" (see cat. nos. 24, 30). Another style has pairs of cross-knotted laces (*hishi*) set wide apart in parallel double rows, referred to as *sugake odoshi* (see cat. nos. 13, 22).

The *odoshi* of a given armor was not limited to a single color. For instance, the shoulder guards could be laced in several rows of progressive, multicolored patterns known as *katadori odoshi*. If the lower border (*suso*) of the shoulder guard was a different color from the rest, the lacing style was known as *susodori odoshi*; a style with a darker color at the lower border is called *susogo odoshi*; and one with a darker top and a lighter lower border is called *nioi odoshi*. Sometimes the edges of the shoulder guards and skirt were laced in triangular arrangements of different colors known as *tsumadori odoshi* ("edge-gathered" lacing; see, e.g., cat. no. 5).

From the Momoyama to the Edo period, as armor became lighter and *sane* became narrower and shorter, thinner lacing came into use. Some armors from this time were also embellished with intricate lacing patterns, such as the *hinomaru* (rising sun), achieved by skillful arrangements of differently colored laces.

### *KANAGU MAWARI*

In addition to *sane* and *odoshi*, the *dō* incorporates a number of large iron components known as *kanagu mawari*. Designed to increase comfort and facilitate movement, particularly where the armor comes in greatest contact with the body, these include the *muna-ita*, attached to the upper part of the breastplate; the *waki-ita* (side pieces); and the *kanmuri-ita* (top plate on the shoulder guards). Another such piece was the *oshitsuke-ita*, which attached to the upper part of the back plate; extended from it at top are the two shoulder straps (*watagami*) (see cat. no. 7) that attached to the front of the armor. Many such pieces were faced in dyed leather (*some-kawa*) and some have gilt-copper edging or rims (*fukurin*). They were also occasionally lacquered, often with heraldic insignia (*mon*) or other motifs depicted in *maki-e* lacquer.

### ARMORERS

Because many materials, including iron, leather, silk, lacquer, and copper, were used in the production of armor, a number of different specialists contributed their skills to the work. Those who made the *sane* that formed the basic fabric of a *yoroi* were called *sane-uchi*, for example. Other craftsmen fashioned and dyed the leather, made the braid, applied the lacquer, and forged the metal fittings and mail. The title of *katchū-shi* was assigned to the lead craftsman who assembled the components and directed the various groups of craftsmen involved. From the Heian until about the early Edo period, the most famous centers of armor production were Nara and Kyōto; however, there were also some local centers of production that served the military needs of particularly powerful daimyo.

There are written references dating from the eighth and ninth centuries to makers of *yoroi*, and some armor survives from as early as the twelfth century, but unlike swords, no armor or helmets with confirmed makers' inscriptions from those early periods have been found. However, in some helmet bowls of the thirteenth century and later, there are marks that may refer to specific makers or schools: for example, the character *ichi* (一) is inscribed inside the helmet bowl of the *beni ito odoshi yoroi*, a thirteenth-century armor with metal fittings decorated with plum blossoms in the Kasuga-taisha, a shrine in Nara; and the character *dai* (大) appears in the bowl of the fourteenth-century helmet of the *dō-maru* armor with dark blue lacing in the Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama (cat. no. 6). Characters such as *ue* (上) and *tei* (丁) on various pieces are thought to refer to the armorers of Nara.

We know the names of some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century schools of armorers—such as the Handa, Haruta, Iwai, Sakonji, and Wakito—both from documents and from inscriptions on existing armors. Helmets signed by the Haruta armorers Mitsusada, Mitsunobu, Munetsugu, Munesada, and others, indicate that the Haruta school comprised a large group of craftsmen specializing in ironwork. Especially well known was Haruta Mitsunobu, who made the armor known as the *kurokawa kata aka odoshi no yoroi* that Ōuchi Yoshitaka, daimyo of the Chūgoku region in the Sengoku-jidai period (1467–1568), dedicated at the Itsukushima-jinja (a shrine in Hiroshima Prefecture) in 1542. The helmet is inscribed on the inside *WASHŪ NANTŌ JŪ HARUTA MITSUNOBU SAKU* ("Made by Haruta Mitsunobu, resident of the southern capital [Nara] of Washū [Yamato] province"). Later, in the Edo period, the Haruta became one of the three great schools of armorers, together with the Iwai and the Myōchin, and they settled throughout Japan. At the beginning of the eighteenth century they became official suppliers to the Edo *bakufu* (Tokugawa shogunate). Later, the school of Haruta Katsumitsu, known as the Unkai school, in Kanazawa domain, became well known as well.

The Iwai of Nara were *katchū-shi*, specializing in the assembly and lacing of armor. In 1600 Iwai Yozaemon earned the trust of Tokugawa Ieyasu during the Battle of Sekigahara, when Ieyasu wore a specially made set of Yozaemon's armor and won a great victory. Ieyasu became shogun in 1603, and thereafter the armor made by the Iwai for each successive shogun was ritually displayed every eleventh of January in the *tokonoma* (alcove) of the Kuro-shoin, the room in Edo Castle where the shogun received daimyo. The name "Iwai" was used by successive generations of *gusoku-shi* (makers of *gusoku* armor) retained by the Tokugawa shogunate from this time until the end of the Edo period. Other craftsmen of the Iwai school, such as the Genbei family, were also employed as *katchū-shi* by the Tokugawa bakufu. The Iwai are known to have been active not only in Edo, Nara, and Kyōto but also in Fukui, Kanazawa, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka.

The Myōchin family specialized in forging horse armor and the metal components of horse tack. Sources indicate that they were originally makers of horse equipment in Kyōto: there are written records to that effect, including a reference to stirrups signed "Myōchin saku" in the *Go Zuishin Sanjō Ki*, a record dated the ninth year of the Eishō era (1512), as well as texts in documents of Ōuchi Yoshitaka and other daimyo of the late Muromachi period. It has also been confirmed that a branch of the family was making *suji-kabuto* helmet bowls in the Kantō region in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century, Myōchin Munenobu settled in Edo, and the family continued working there until the time of Myōchin Muneharu (1824–1880), by the end of whose career armor was no longer being actively made.

By the sixth year of the Kansei era (1794), the Myōchin had achieved the status of government armorers even though they were independent ("town") armorers and, unlike the Iwai and the Haruta, not officially appointed. After the time of Munenobu, the Myōchin styled themselves *On Katchū no Kiwame-dokoro, Nippon Yuitsu no Katchū no Ryōkō* ("The Official Appraisers of Armor, The Best Armorers in Japan"), and they made armor to advertize the high quality of their workmanship. They also drew up genealogies and family records purporting to show that their ancestors had made armor in ancient times, and they published certificates of evaluation (*origami*) testifying to their own skill. The latter have been widely accepted at face value, and as a consequence the Myōchin are the most widely known school of Japanese armorers. They instituted a system whereby students came from the provinces to stay and work in the Myōchin school in Edo and took the name Myōchin when they returned home to make armor for the lords of their own province. The Myōchin family had reversals of fortune, but they continued to find work across Japan, from Hirosaki (Aomori Prefecture) in the north to Obi (Miyazaki Prefecture) in the south.

The modernization of Japanese society that characterized the Meiji period (1867–1912) included a rapid and thorough adoption of Western military technology. While traditional Japanese swords were modified and adapted to meet modern military needs and continued to be used, although in a much reduced capacity, armor completely ceased to be worn in a military context. However, a combination of factors unique to Japan—including the making and use of armor until the Meiji period, its continued veneration as votive objects in shrines and temples, and its importance as valuable family heirlooms—fortunately resulted in the preservation of an extraordinary wealth of fine examples dating from the twelfth century through the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It is for these reasons that today we are able to appreciate the full scope and beauty of this unique aspect of samurai culture and the arts of Japan.

## 1.

## *Haniwa* (terracotta figurine) of a standing warrior

## 重要文化財　埴輪：武装男子立像

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Kofun period, 6th century
Earthenware
Overall H., 124.8 cm (49⅛ in.); H. of figure, 100.6 cm (39⅝ in.)
Aikawa Archaeological Museum, Gunma Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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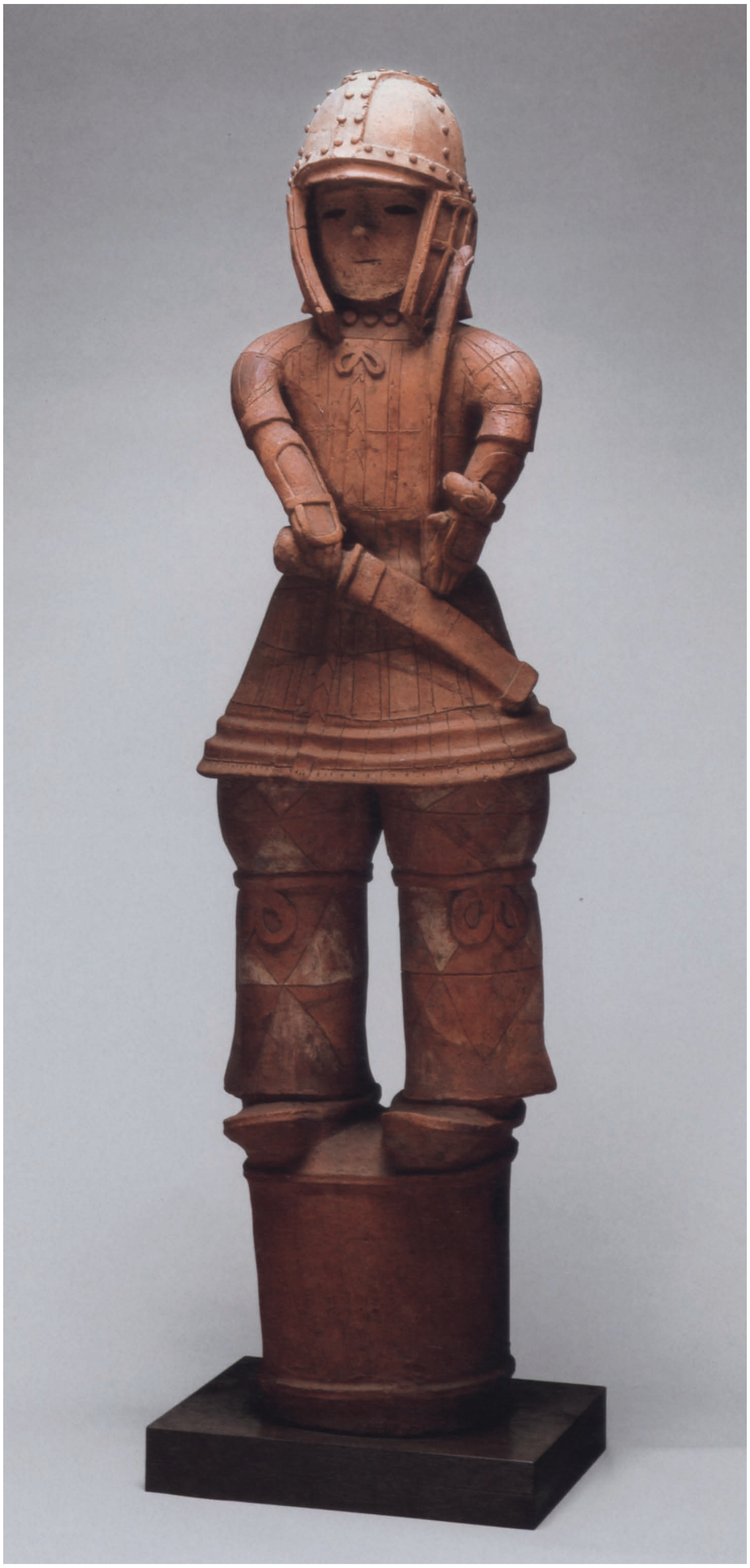
This fine example of a *haniwa* (unglazed terracotta figurine) depicts a standing warrior in exacting detail. He wears a *keikō*-type armor—a flexible armor made of small leather or iron plates (*sane*)—and a helmet with a *shikoro* (neck guard). He carries his sword at the front of his waist, lightly gripping the hilt in his right hand. In his left hand he would have held a bow; accordingly, his left wrist is wrapped in a bracer, and on his back he bears a small quiver containing a number of barbed arrows. ST

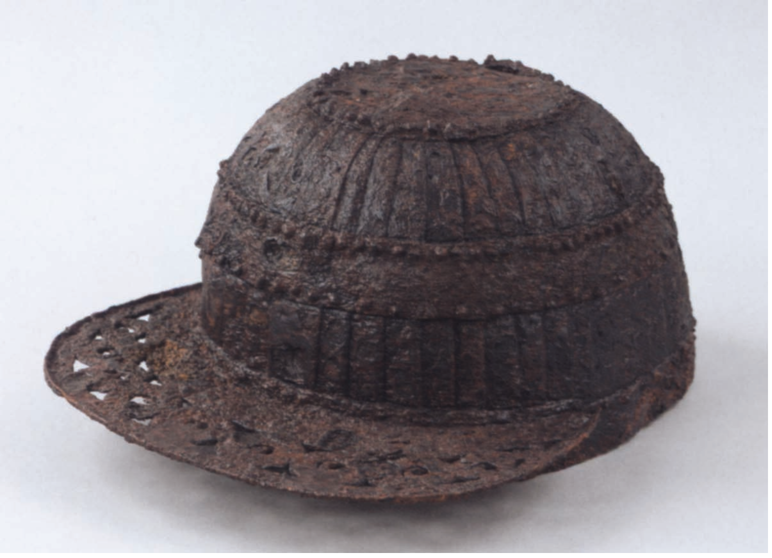


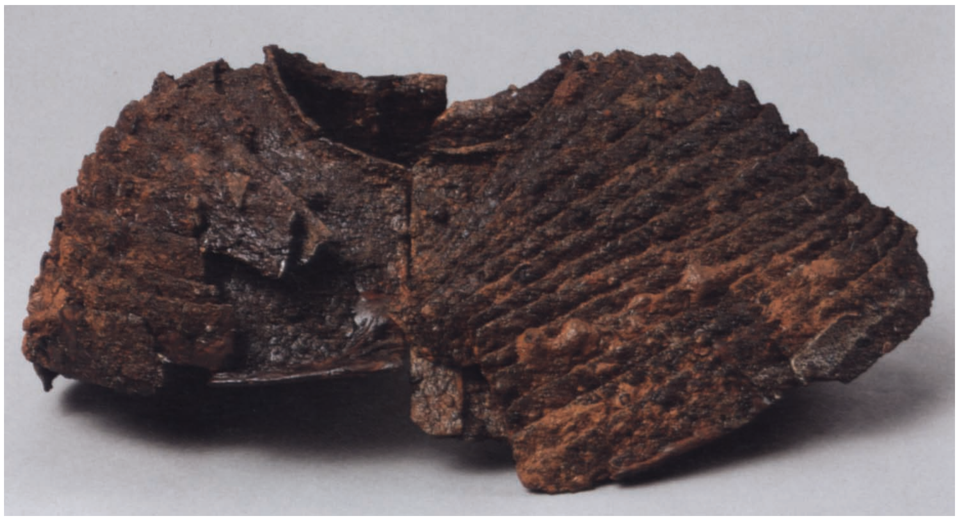
## 2.

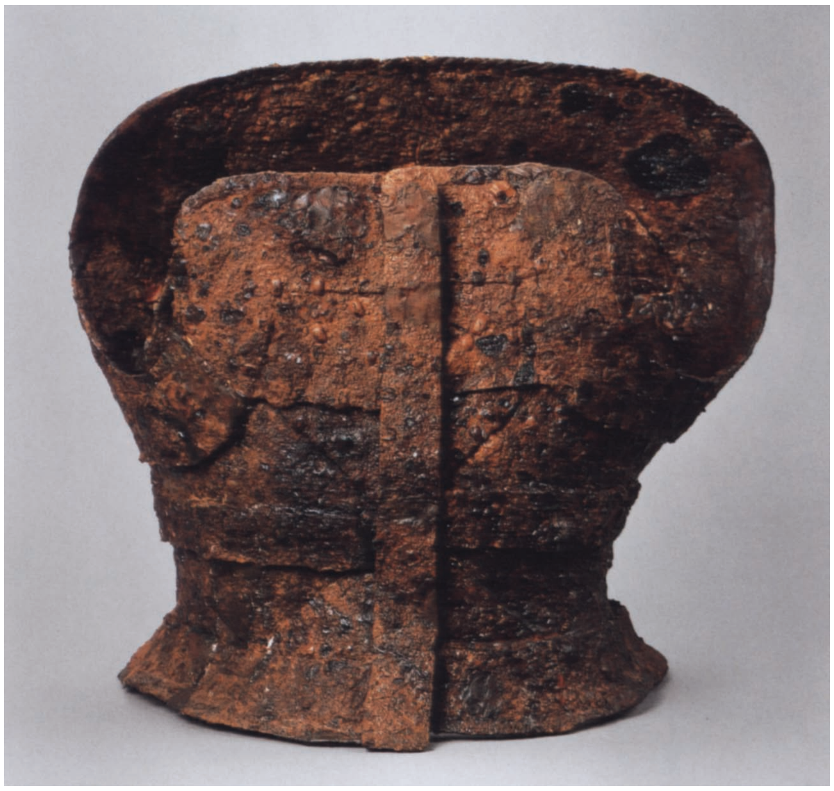
## *Tankō* armor with helmet and shoulder guard

## 重要文化財 短甲，附眉庇付冑·肩甲付頸甲

Kofun period, 5th century
Iron
H. of helmet bowl, 13.5 cm (5⅜ in.); H. of neck guard, 15 cm (5⅞ in.); H. of cuirass, 45 cm (17¾ in.)
Shiga Prefecture Azuchi Castle Archaeological Museum
**Important Cultural Property**



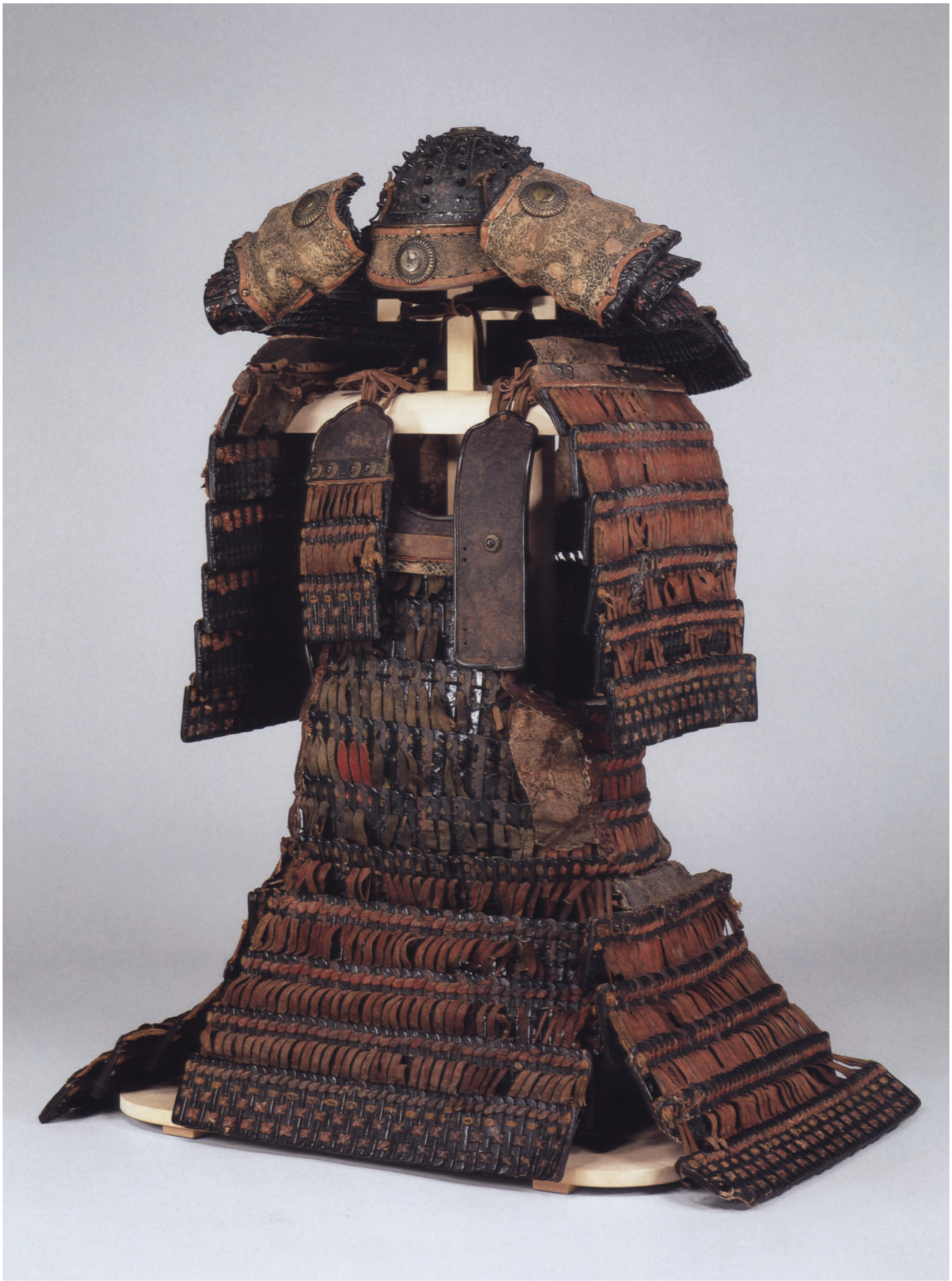




The components of this early *tankō*-type iron armor were excavated together and are in a good state of preservation, making the set an extremely valuable reference for our understanding of Kofun-period armor. The bowl of the peaked (or brimmed) helmet comprises forty-two iron plates arranged in two tiers. The pronounced brim is somewhat rectangular in shape, has rounded corners, and widens at the front. It is decorated with three pierced motifs: a *magatama* ("comma"-shaped jewel or bead) at center, and triangular openings at the sides. The neck guard and shoulder guard together protected the neck on both sides. The shoulder guard comprises linked bands of iron plates, ten of which remain on the right shoulder and fourteen on the left.

The cuirass (*dō*) comprises three triangular plates and two encircling bands (*obigane*). Along with the *oshitsuke-no-ita* (the vertical center piece of the cuirass extending above the shoulders at the back) and the *suso-ita* (bottom metal plate), which was linked to the *dō* with leather cords, it formed a type of armor referred to as a *sankakukei ita kawa tsuzuri shiki tankō* (leather-linked triangular-plate *tankō* armor). The second *obigane* is fixed by rivets on the left and right sides. Although the rim of the *suso-ita* does not survive, the lacing holes are still visible.

ST



Front

### 3.

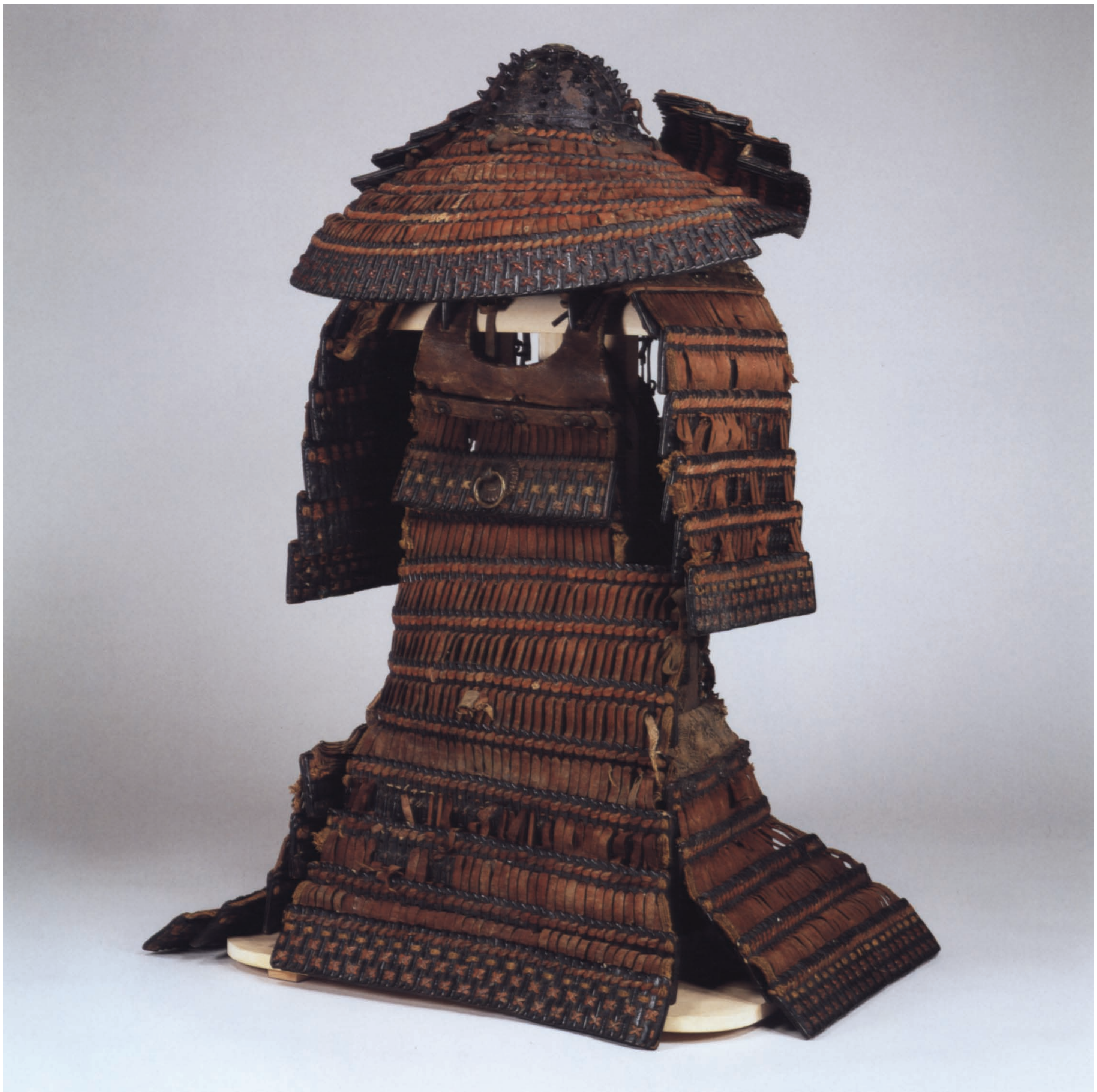
## *Yoroi* armor with red-leather lacing

## 国宝 赤革威鎧

Heian period, 12th century
Iron, copper, gold, leather, and silk
H. of helmet bowl, 12.6 cm (5 in.); H. of neck guard, 27 cm (10⅝ in.); H. of cuirass, 37 cm (14⅝ in.); H. of skirt, 24.5 cm (9⅝ in.); each shoulder guard, 42.5 × 33 cm (16¾ × 13 in.)
Okayama Prefectural Museum
**National Treasure**

The type of armor worn by high-ranking samurai from about the Heian through the early Muromachi periods is referred to as a *yoroi*. Such armors generally consisted of the following components: a *dō* (cuirass), comprising two front and back pieces joined together with a left-side piece; a four-part *kusazuri* (protective skirt) suspended from the cuirass; a separate piece called a *waidate* that protected the wearer's right side; two panels, a *sendan-no-ita* and a *kyubi-no-ita*, hanging at the breast; two *sode* (shoulder guards); and a type of helmet known as a *hoshi-kabuto*. Because *yoroi* tended to be larger than the *haramaki* and *dō-maru* armors worn by the infantry, they are often referred to as *ō-yoroi* ("great" armors).

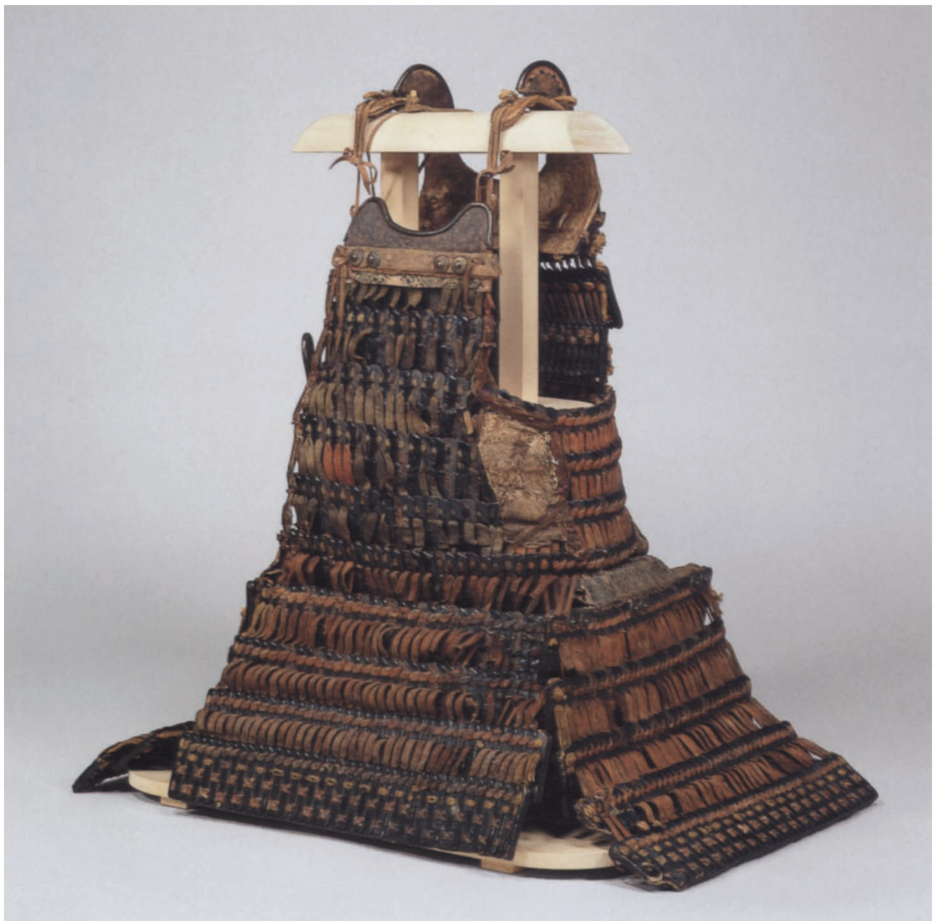
This example, which was intended for practical service, has red-dyed tanned deerskin lacing linking the vertical rows of scales. Although old documents



Back

mention armors laced in red leather, this is the only known example that survives. Certain elements of the construction are characteristic of the Heian period: the relatively large scales (*sane*) that measure between 7.2 and 7.4 centimeters in height and between 3.3 and 3.4 centimeters in width; the *hoshi-bachi*–type helmet bowl comprising ten divisions; and the four rows of the front and back of the *kusazuri* (there are usually five). However, the shape of the *shikoro* (neck guard) and the *fukigaeshi*—the two "flaps" that are turned back at the front of the *shikoro*, on either side of the head—and the *mojishi-gawa*—the leather stenciled with dyed *shishi* (Chinese lions) and water grasses—indicate later conservation work, probably in the fourteenth century.

Unlike most extant Heian- and Kamakura-period armors, which have generally been preserved in the collections of temples and shrines, this set was until recently in the possession of the Akagi family of Okayama Prefecture. That provenance is extremely valuable in its own regard as a record of a single armor that was passed down in a samurai house and repaired a number of times over the years. IH



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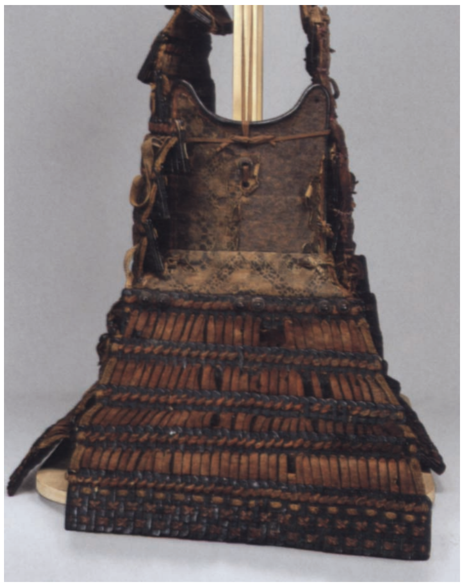
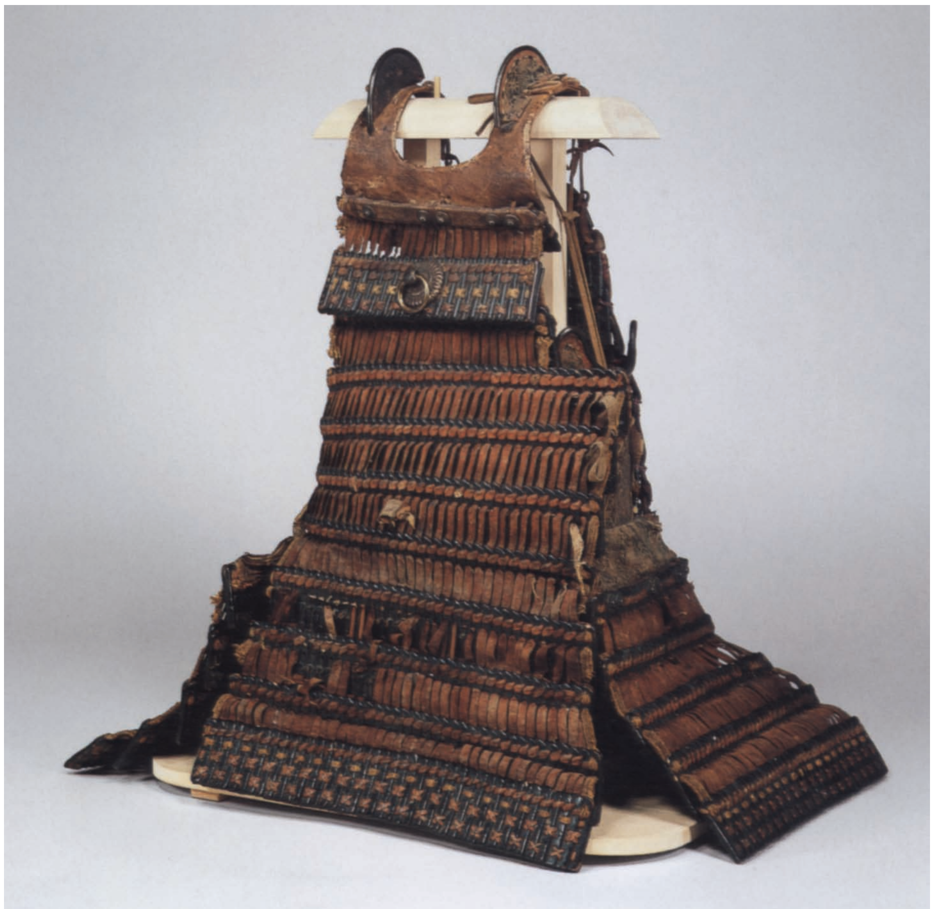


Right side



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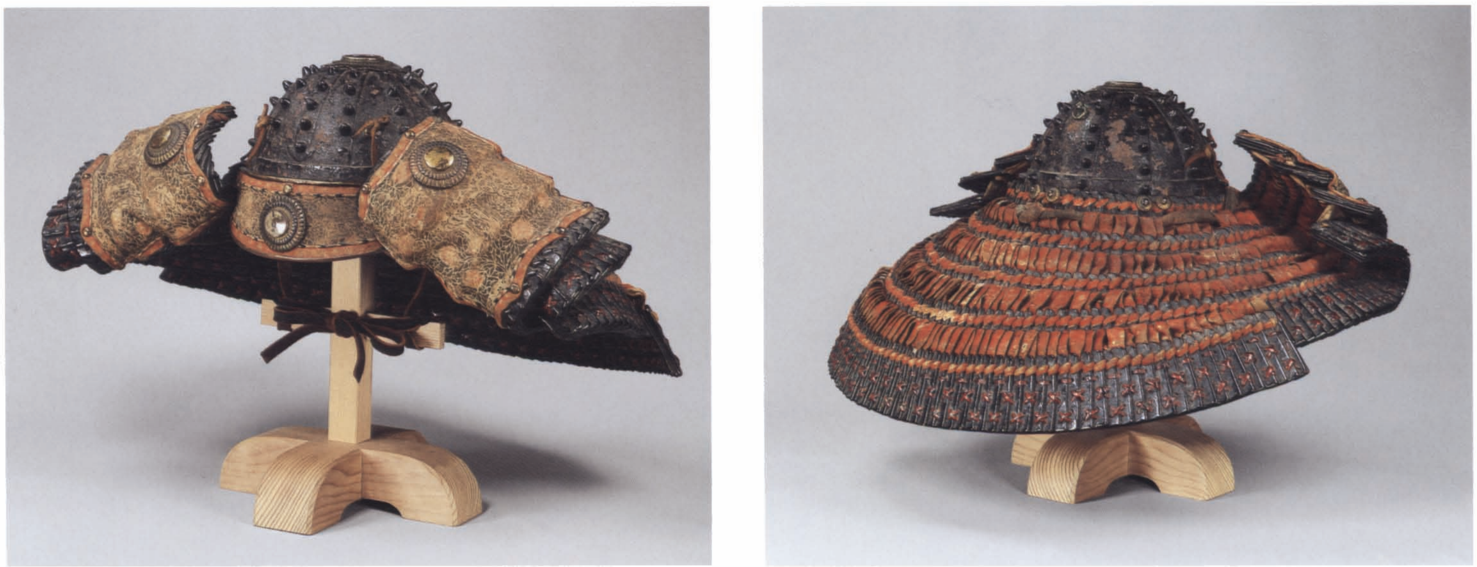
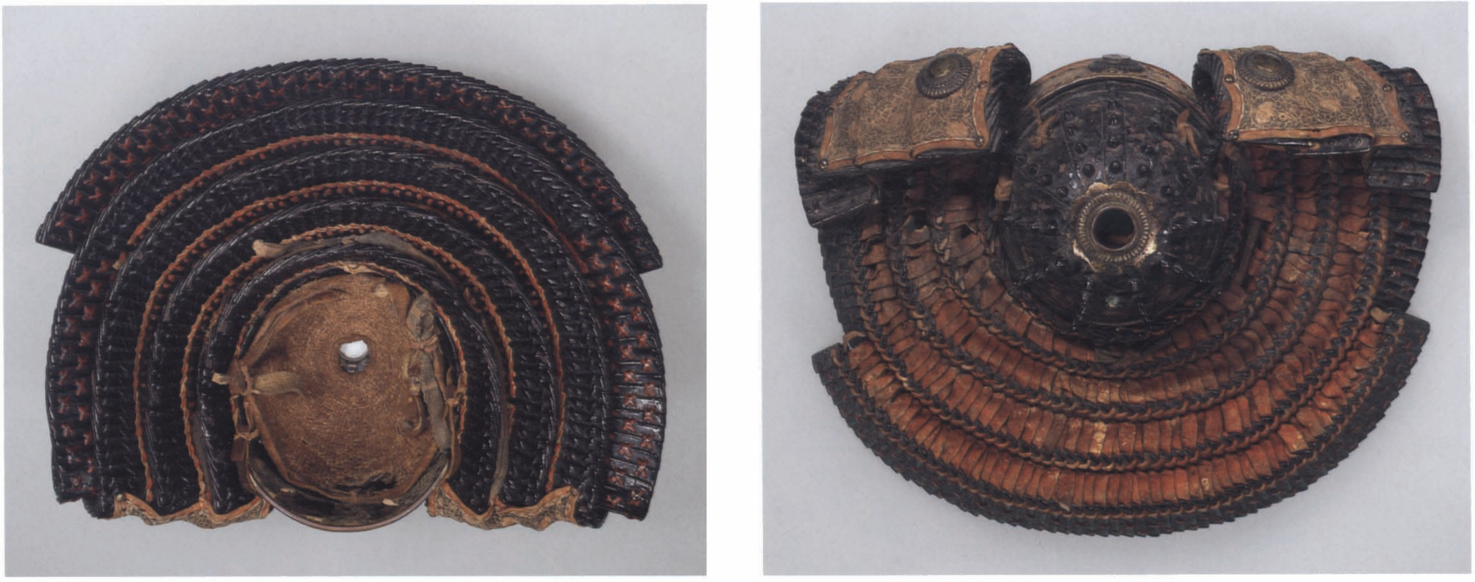
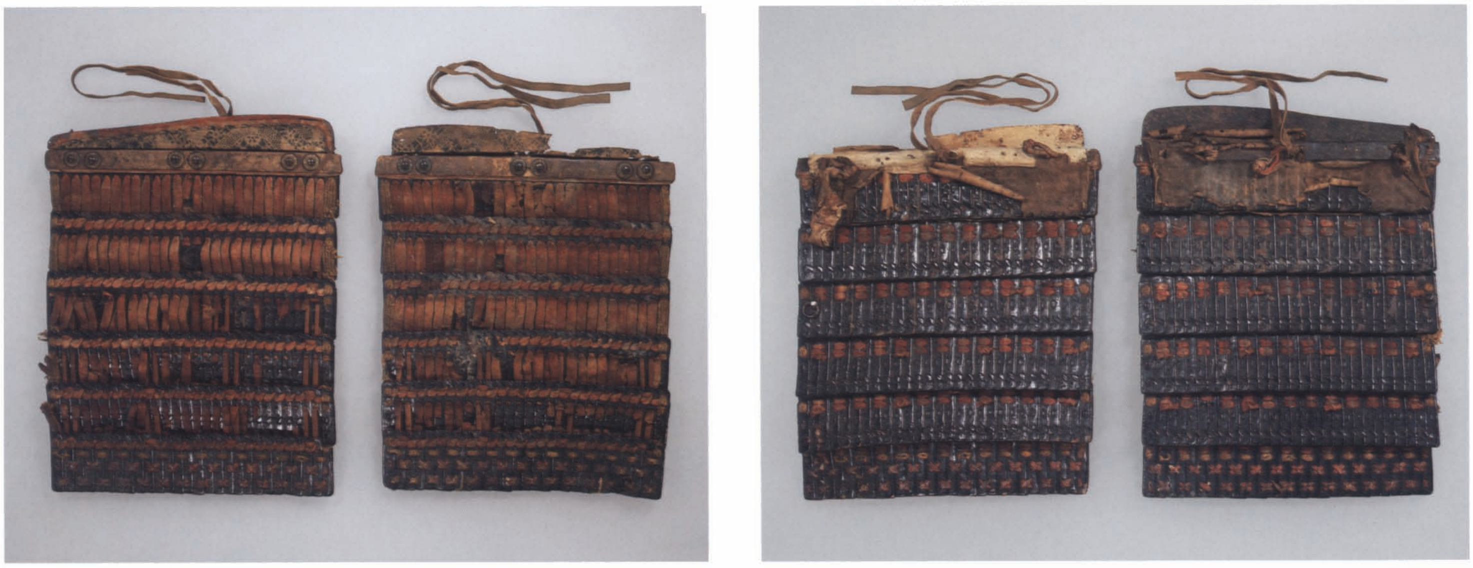


*Kabuto* (helmet), front and rear (showing neck guard)



Underside and top of *kabuto*



*Sode* (shoulder guards), exterior and interior

## 4.

## *Kote* (armored sleeves)

## 国宝 籠手

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Kamakura period, 13th century
Iron, copper, gold, and silk
L. of each sleeve, 66.6 cm (26¼ in.)
Kasuga-taisha Shrine, Nara
**National Treasure**

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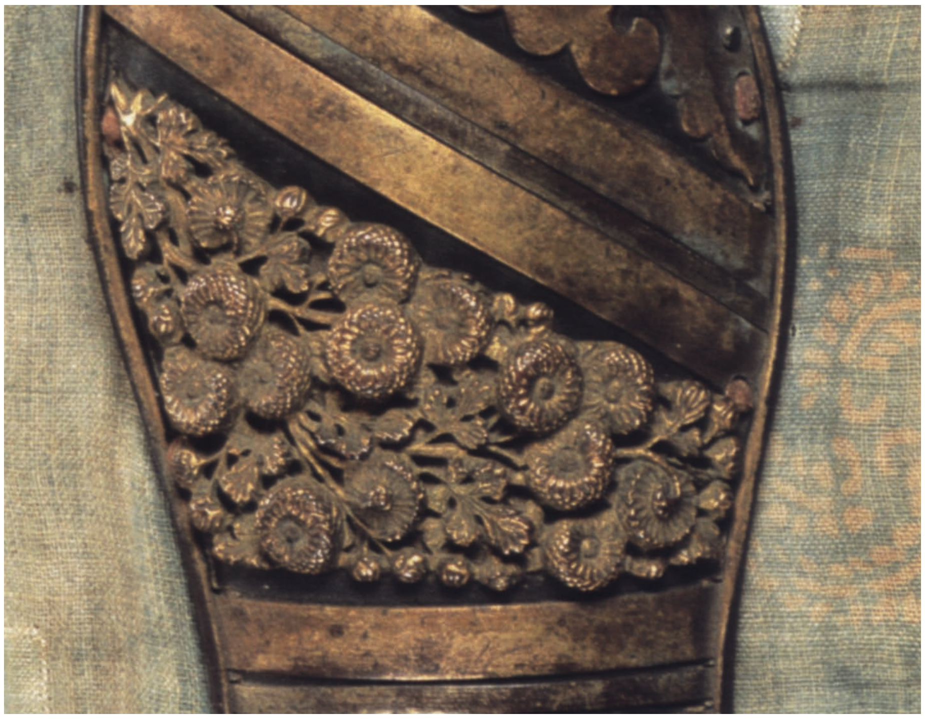
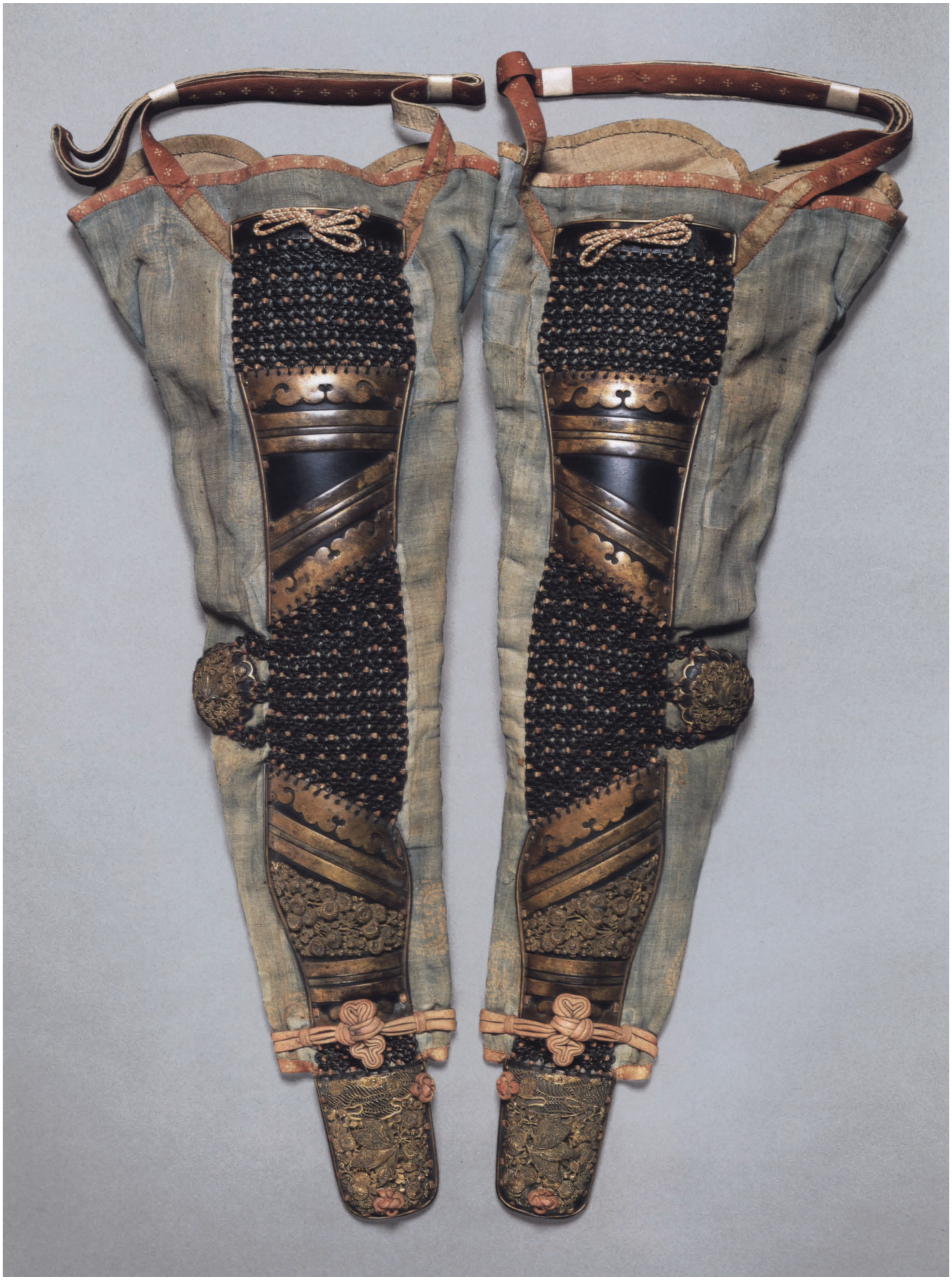
*Kote* consist of separate metal covers for the hands, lower arm, upper arm, and elbows that are linked together by a flexible iron mesh and sewn onto textile sleeves. Because samurai of the Heian and Kamakura periods were principally shooting arrows from horseback, they wore a *kote* on the left arm only, and this became a standard practice among that class. Lower-status warriors normally wore *kote* on both arms, however, and that became the general custom beginning in the Nanbokuchō period.

*Kote* were considered less important than body armor and helmets, and consequently very few survive. This pair, the only known example from the Kamakura period, is extremely important in terms of the history of Japanese metalwork since the hand, arm, and elbow pieces are made of gilt copper and embellished with flowing water, chrysanthemum blossoms, and butterflies carved in high relief. The fact that there are two *kote* (not just a left) suggests that they were made as a dedicatory offering. They were passed down by the priests of the Kōfuku-ji, an ancient Buddhist temple, and are known as the "Yoshitsune-Gote" because they were held to have been relics of the famous warrior-hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189), even though they actually date from the latter half of the Kamakura period. IH



Detail of metalwork



## 5.

## *Yoroi* armor with white triangular-pattern lacing

## 国宝 白糸妻取威鎧

Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
H. of helmet bowl, 13.5 cm (5⅜ in.); H. of front of cuirass, 32.5 cm (12¾ in.); H. of front of skirt, 29.5 cm (11⅝ in.)
Kushibiki-hachimangū Shrine, Aomori Prefecture
**National Treasure**

In the *tsumadori* style of armor lacing, various colors are used to form triangular patterns along the edges of the *sode* (shoulder guards) and *kusazuri* (skirt). The name conjures up the effect produced by the layering of kimonos worn by women: although the word *tsuma* means "wife," a similar character with the same pronunciation refers to the edge of the kimono cloth, which when layered formed a triangular pattern at bottom. The style was fashionable from the late Kamakura to the early Muromachi period.

This piece is unique among armors with *tsumadori* lacing in that the original *kabuto* (helmet), *dō* (cuirass), and *sode* are intact. The lacing of the armor is basically white. The only decoration at the center back of the *shikoro* (neck guard) is *omodaka odoshi*: colored lacing in the shape of an isosceles triangle. The *tsumadori* lacing of the *sode* and the *kusazuri* consists of five colors: red, yellow-green, yellow, light purple, and purple. The lacing that forms the *tsumadori* pattern on the *sode* narrows as it nears the lower edge (*suso*); that on the *kusazuri* widens toward the lower edge of each panel.

The bowl of the helmet is a *hoshi-bachi* with thirty-two divisions formed from thirty-eight narrow trapezoidal plates of iron joined together. The metal fittings on the helmet bowl, the *muna-ita* (breastplate attachment) of the *dō*, and their components have edgings (*fukurin*) made of copper gilded first in gold and then in silver; all the metal paulownia designs, including that on the brim of the helmet, are gilded as well.

This armor is believed to be the one cited in the *Hachinoheke denki* (Record of the Hachinohe House) as having been given by the Emperor Go-Murakami to Nanbu Nobumitsu, lord of the Hachinohe domain, in the twenty-second year of the Shōhei era (1367), and which his successor, Mitsutsune, offered in dedication to a shrine, the Kushibiki-hachimangū, in the eighteenth year of the Ōei era (1411).

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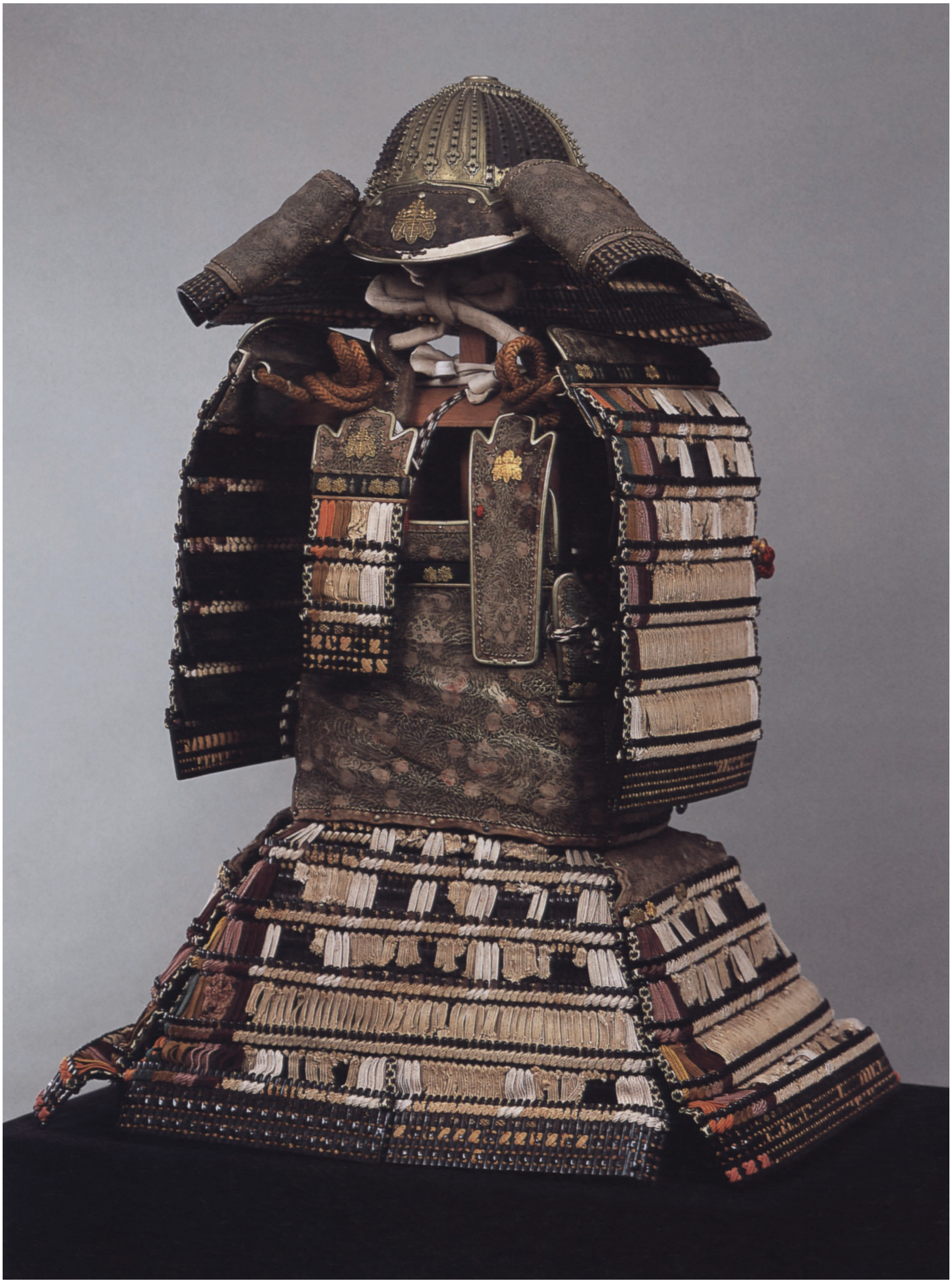

## 6.

## *Dō-maru* armor with dark blue lacing

## 重要文化財 紺糸威胴丸

Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Iron, leather, copper, gold, and silk
H. of helmet bowl, 13 cm (5⅛ in.); H. of cuirass, 32.5 cm (12¾ in.)
Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

The *dō-maru* armor, which closes along the right side of the cuirass, was intended to be worn by infantry, as opposed to the *yoroi*, which was designed for use by mounted archers. Its use dates to about the twelfth century. Originally it comprised just a *dō* (cuirass) and an eight-section *kusazuri* (skirt) and was made light to facilitate walking; a helmet and shoulder pieces were added only as required.

Beginning about the fourteenth century, matching sets of cuirass, helmet, and shoulder pieces were made and were worn by high-ranking samurai in place of the *yoroi*. This *dō-maru* is one such set: the helmet, cuirass, and shoulder pieces are finished with light blue lacing; *gyōyō* (leaf-shaped plates) are suspended at the juncture of the shoulder and chest; and the metal fittings are made of gilt copper and embellished with chrysanthemum motifs. The helmet, a fifty-plate *suji-bachi* (ridged bowl), originally had large *kuwagata* (stylized horns) at the front. The *shikoro* (neck guard) is made in four rows, while the *fukigaeshi* (the portions of the neck guard that are turned back at the sides) are in three rows, with a facing of tanned leather. The set was passed down in the Tononanbu family of Iwate Prefecture, who displayed it in a *tokonoma*—an alcove in the house traditionally used to present an important object or painting, vase of flowers, or an evocation of the season—where it was venerated until the late Edo period.

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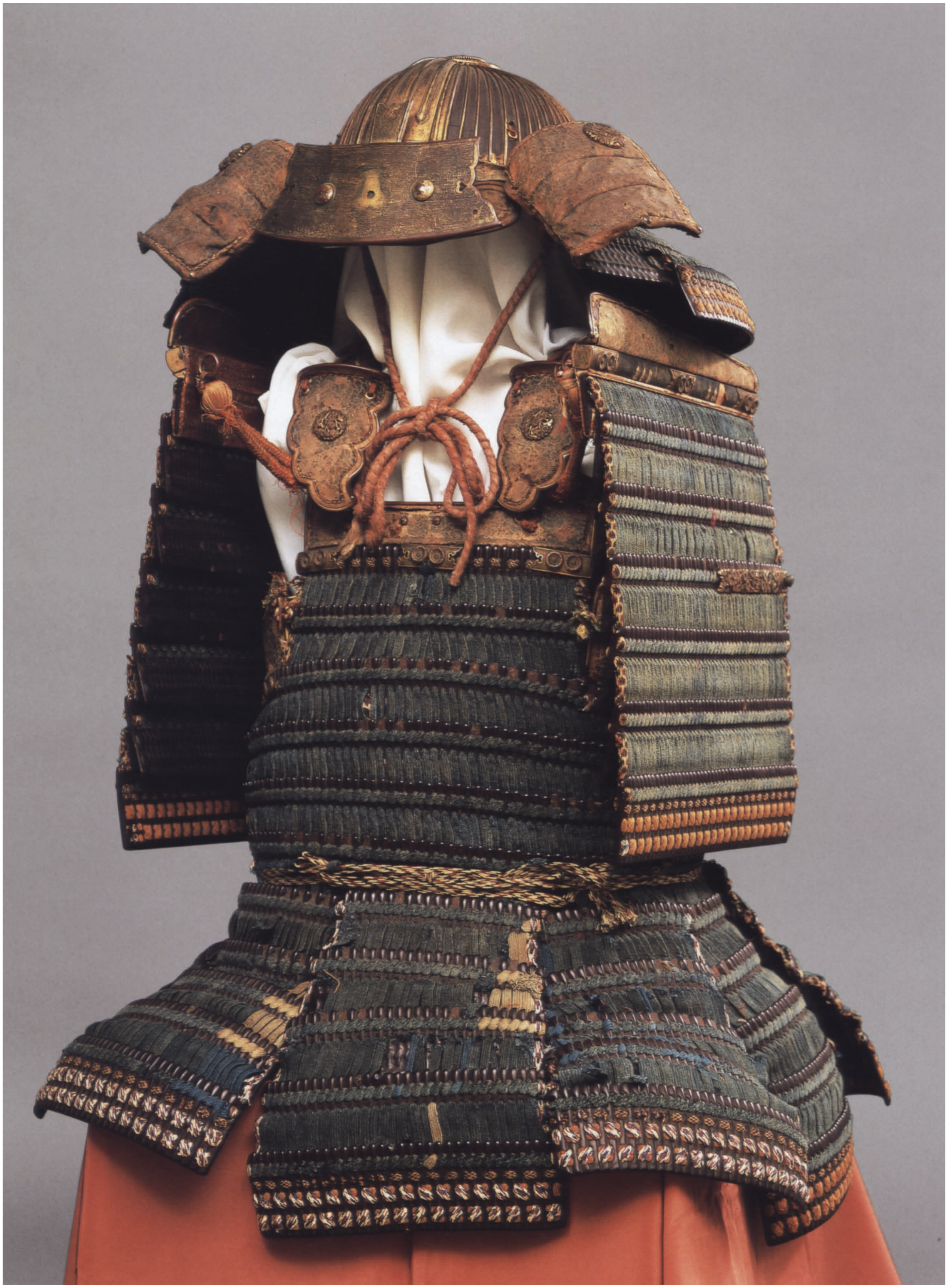


## 7.

## *Dō-maru* armor with multicolored lacing and large shoulder guards

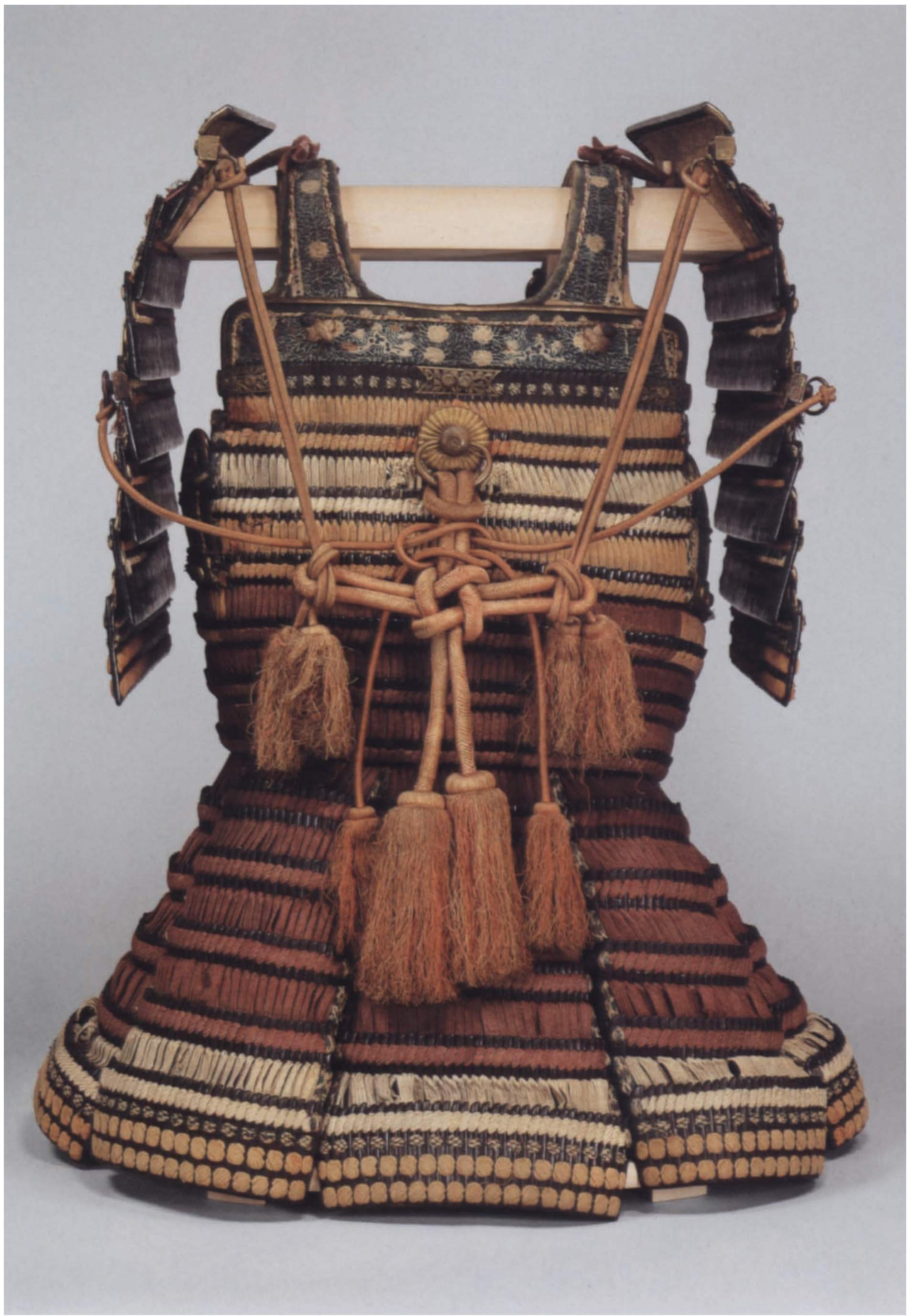
## 重要文化財 色々威胴丸

Muromachi period, 15th century
Iron, leather, lacquer, gold, copper, and silk
H. of cuirass, 28.5 cm (11¼ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

The *dō-maru* was developed in response to a demand for a light armor to replace the heavier *yoroi* (see, e.g., cat. no. 3), which restricted movement. It became the primary type of Japanese armor during the Muromachi period, when hand-to-hand combat was the prevalent form of warfare, and was worn in place of the traditional *yoroi* even by military commanders.

The main structure of this *dō-maru* comprises *kozane* (small scales, or *sane*) made of lacquered iron and leather that overlap alternately. The *dō* (cuirass), which was wrapped around the body and secured down the right side, and the *kusazuri* (skirt) are laced using mainly purple cords, which in combination with the red and white lacing elsewhere is referred to as *iroiro odoshi* (multicolored lacing). The left and right *ō-sode* (large shoulder guards) are similarly constructed, but the coloring includes repeating bands of purple, red, and white lacing. At the top of the cuirass, the *takahimo* (fastening cords) are protected by hanging *gyōyō* (leaf-shaped plates). The *kusazuri* has seven closely divided sections, reflecting an ancient style. The *mojishi*—the motifs of *shishi* (Chinese lions) and water plants—stenciled on the dyed deerskin covering the lacing around the metal parts was a commonly used decorative motif. With its matching *dō*, *ō-sode*, and *gyōyō*, this *dō-maru* is in a particularly fine state of preservation.

IT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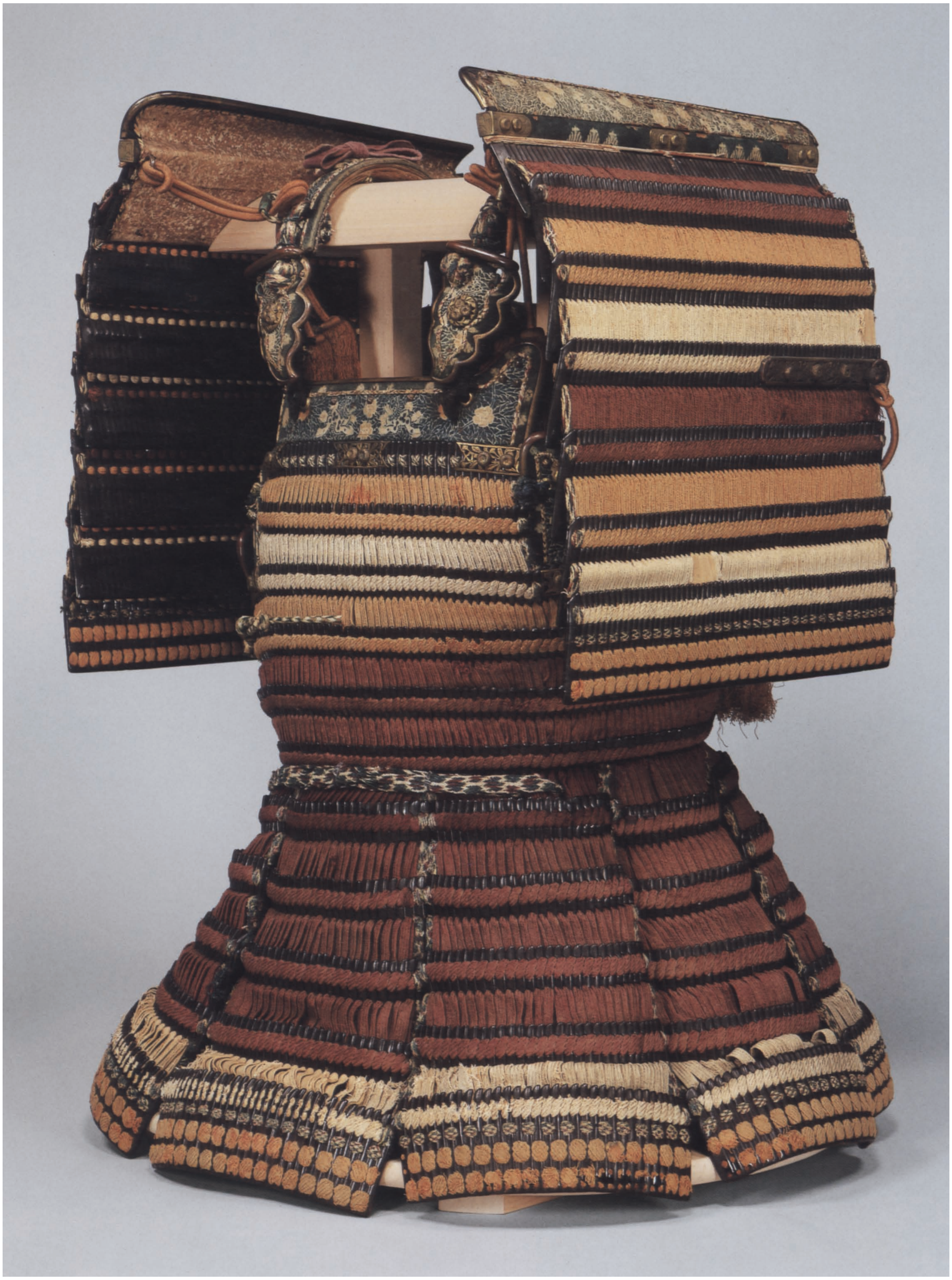

## 8.

## *Haramaki* armor with multicolored lacing, ridged helmet, and large shoulder guards

## 重要文化財 色々威腹巻 兜。大袖付

Muromachi period, 15th century
Iron, leather, gilt copper, lacquer, braid, and cord
H. of cuirass, 27.3 cm (10¾ in.); H. of skirt, 31.2 cm (12¼ in.); H. of helmet bowl, 12.2 cm (4¾ in.); Diam. of helmet bowl (front to back), 20.6 cm (8⅛ in.); each shoulder guard, 43.1 × 35.5 cm (17 × 14 in.)
Sata-jinja Shrine, Shimane Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

This representative Muromachi-period *haramaki* armor is in relatively fine condition and is complete with its original helmet and shoulder guards. The thirty-two-plate *suji-kabuto* (ridged helmet) is lacquered black and has gilt edging (*fukurin*); the top is somewhat depressed, in a form known as *akoda* (referring to the shape of a squashlike fruit). It has a three-pronged *shinodare* (a type of arrow shape) at the front and a two-pronged *shinodare* at the back. The brim at the front has a *kuwagata-dai* (bracket) joined to the helmet with chrysanthemum-shaped rivets; it holds gilt *kuwagata* (stylized horns) in the shape of leaves from the *kaji*, a type of mulberry tree that has been revered since ancient times and was often used as a sacred dedication to *kami* (Shinto deities). The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises three rows of *sane*, two of which form the *fukigaeshi* (the sections of the guard that are turned back at front), and is laced in brown, red, and white.

The scales on the cuirass are black-lacquered leather *hon-kozane* (small individual scales). They are lacquered into layers, and the lacings joining them are multicolored (*iroiro odoshi*) in rows of purple, white, and red. The cuirass comprises a two-row *tate-age* (upper section) at the front and back, and four-row *nagakawa* (side pieces). The *kusazuri* (skirt) has seven sections, each with five rows. The metal components at the top of the shoulder guards and the cuirass are faced in tanned leather decorated with stenciled *shishi* (Chinese lions) and peonies.

Each of the *ō-sode* (large shoulder guards) comprises seven rows of lacing in red, white, and purple. The *kesho-ita*—narrow bands or struts at the bases of the large plates on the top of the shoulder guards, breast, and back—are made of tanned leather embellished with *shobu* (iris) motifs and have raised central ridges.

A *dō-maru* armor in the collection of the Sata-jinja is also furnished complete with a helmet and *ō-sode* and exhibits virtually the same design and manufacture as this example. According to shrine tradition, that armor—like this set, an officially designated Important Cultural Property—was donated by Amako Tsunehisa (1448–1541), later the protector (*shugodai*) of Izumo province (in present-day Shimane Prefecture).

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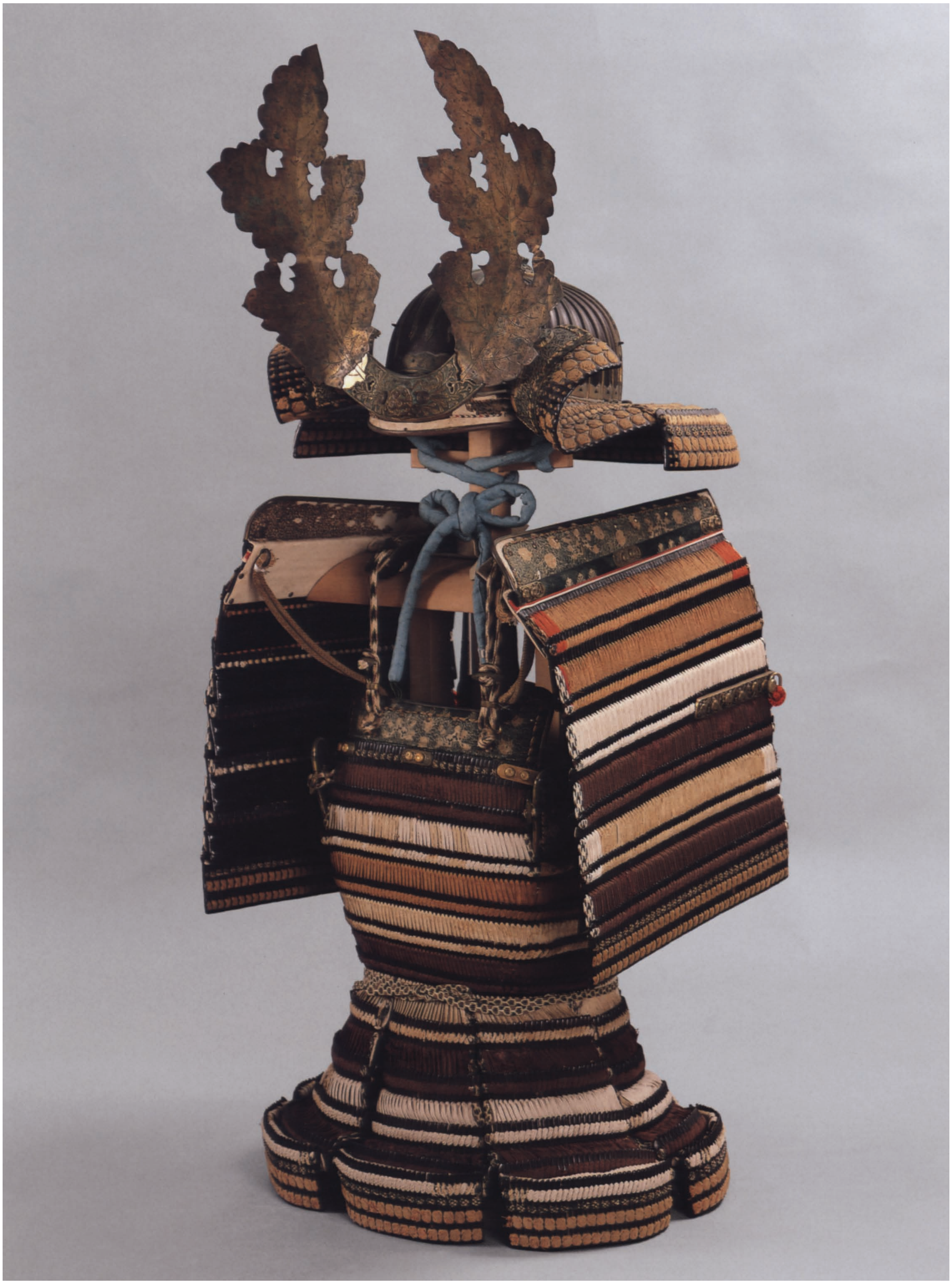


## 9.

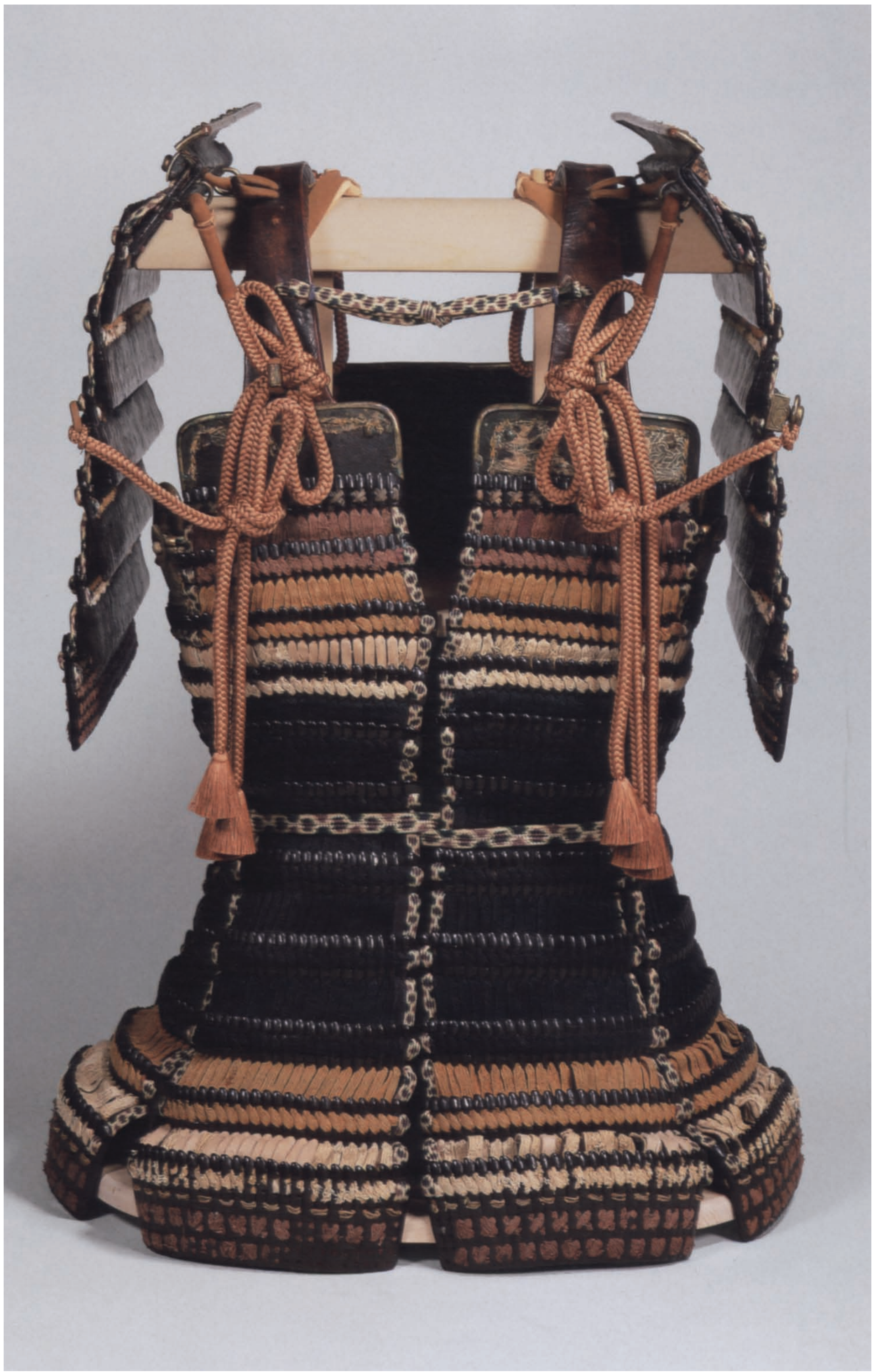
### *Haramaki* armor with multicolored lacing and large shoulder guards

### 重要文化財 色々威腹巻

Muromachi period, 16th century
Iron, leather, copper, gold, lacquer, and silk
H. of cuirass, 27.2 cm (10¾ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

This late Muromachi-period *haramaki*-type armor is complete with its original *ō-sode* (large shoulder guards). The colorful lacing (*odoshi*) comprises rows of purple, red, white, and dark blue. The metal plates at the top of the breast and back sections (the *muna-ita* and *se-ita*, respectively) and at the top of the shoulder guards (*kanmuri-ita*) combine the functions of protection and decoration. They are faced in dyed leather stenciled with designs of *shishi* (Chinese lions) among water weeds. The *kesho-ita*—thin wooden strips below the *kanmuri-ita*—are covered by indigo-dyed leather with white *shobu* (irises) and are fixed by chrysanthemum-shaped rivets. The plates also have gilt-copper edging (*fukurin*).

The number of later replacement pieces in this armor has been kept to a minimum, and they have been tastefully incorporated so that the armor retains its original form. The set was handed down by the Itō family of Obi domain, in Hyūga province (present-day Miyazaki Prefecture). IT



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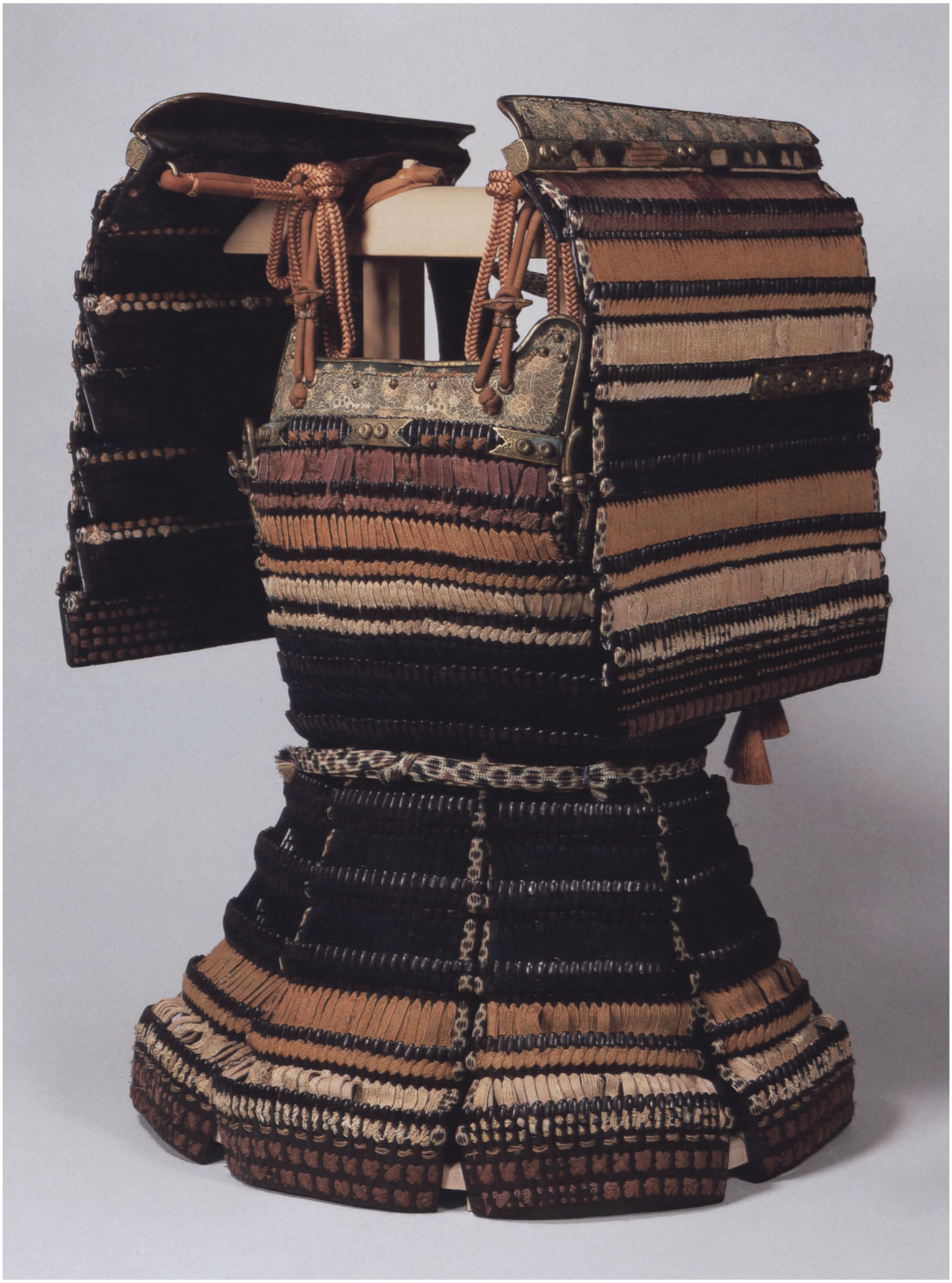

## 10.

## *Dō-maru gusoku* armor with black lacing and three-branched deerhorn helmet

## 重要文化財 黒糸威胴丸具足

Momoyama period, 16th century
H. of helmet bowl, 17.8 cm (7 in.);
H. of cuirass, 39 cm (15⅜ in.)
Private collection
**Important Cultural Property**

Honda Tadakatsu, the original owner of this impressive armor (see cat. no. 11), was one of the Shi-Tennō: the "Four Trusted Retainers" of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who are sometimes identified with the Four Guardian Kings of Buddhism. (The other three were Sakai Tadatsugu, Sakakibara Yasumasa, and Ii Naomasa.) Tadakatsu, who followed Ieyasu into battle more than fifty times, became the lord of Kuwana Castle in Ise province (present-day Mie Prefecture) in the sixth year of the Keichō era (1601).

The helmet has a twelve-plate *shii-nari* ("sweet acorn")-shaped bowl with large *wakidate* (side crests) in the form of deer antlers, thought to be made of lacquered papier-mâché on wood. It is renowned as Tadakatsu's "Mitsumatakazuno" (three-branched deerhorn helmet). The cuirass, which comprises black-lacquered iron *kittsukezane* (plates made to resemble linked *kozane* scales), closes at the left side with a hinge. The *kusazuri* (skirt) is made of leather in seven sections of five rows each. The helmet and cuirass both have black lacings, while the metal components of the *kote* (sleeves) and *haidate* (thigh guards) are lacquered black, which over time has turned a rich dark green. A large rosary made of wood covered with gold leaf is slung over one shoulder.

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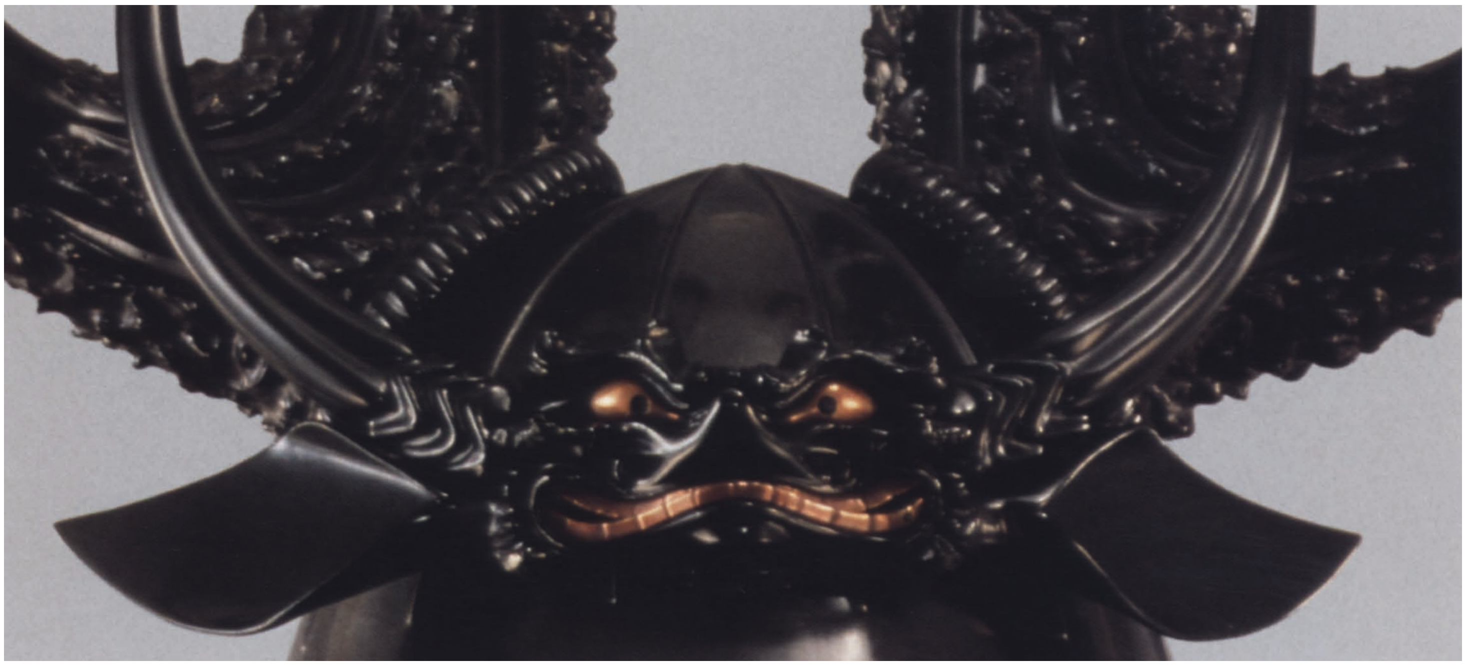
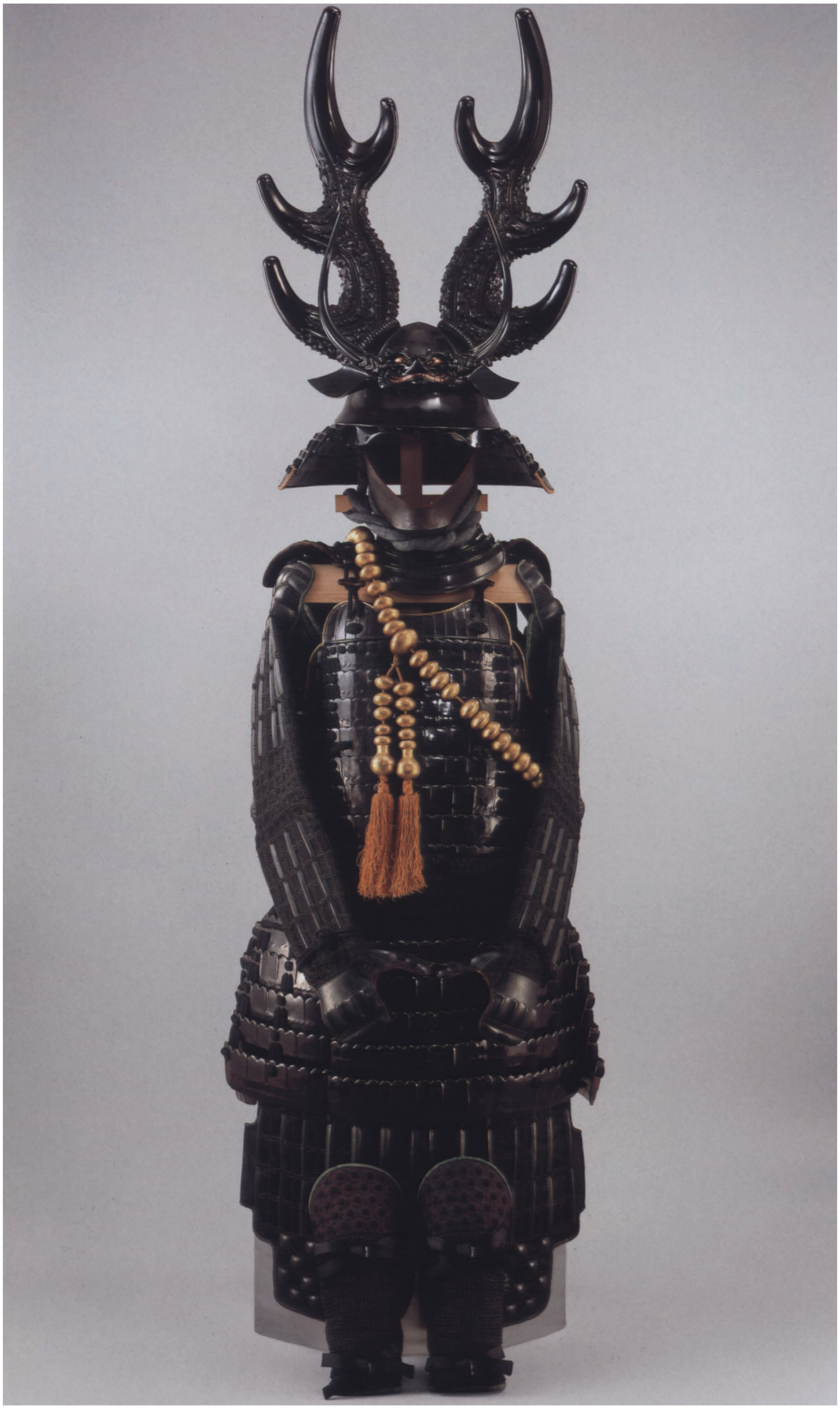


Detail of *kabuto* (helmet)



## 11.

## Honda Tadakatsu

## 重要文化財 紙本着色本多忠勝像一幅

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Edo period, 17th century
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
124 × 64 cm (48⅞ × 25¼ in.)
Private collection
**Important Cultural Property**

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This portrait is said to show the warrior Honda Tadakatsu (1548–1610) late in his life wearing his favorite black-laced *dō-maru gusoku* armor (cat. no. 10), which includes his famous helmet, with its dramatically projecting "deerhorn" side crests (*waki-date*). Along with the armor, he wears two swords, a *tachi* and a *wakizashi*, at the waist, thrust through his belt, with the cutting edges facing down. Over his right shoulder hangs a large rosary. He is depicted sitting on a folding camp stool with his knees spread wide apart and his eyes glimmering piercingly. His shoulders are squared, and he grips a white-hair *saihai* (command baton) in his right hand, in the attitude of one who is prepared to step into the front line of battle: in all, an accurate representation of Tadakatsu as a powerful, seasoned warrior.

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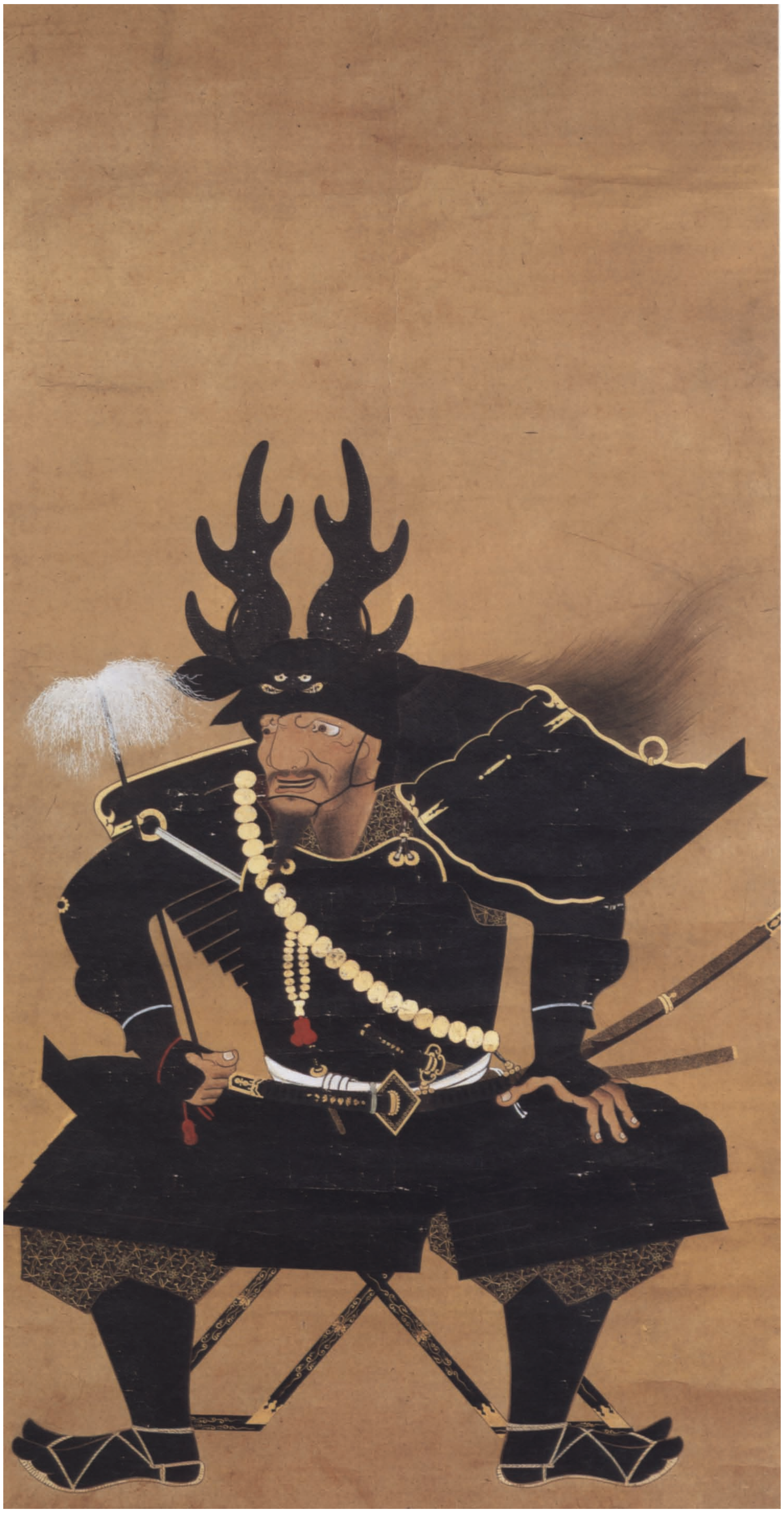

## 12.

### *Nimai-dō gusoku* armor with dark blue and red lacing

### 紺紅糸威二枚胴具足

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Edo period, 18th century
Iron, wood, leather, gold, and lacquer
H. of helmet bowl, 13.9 cm (5½ in.);
H. of cuirass, 35 cm (13¾ in.)
Okazaki City Museum, Aichi Prefecture

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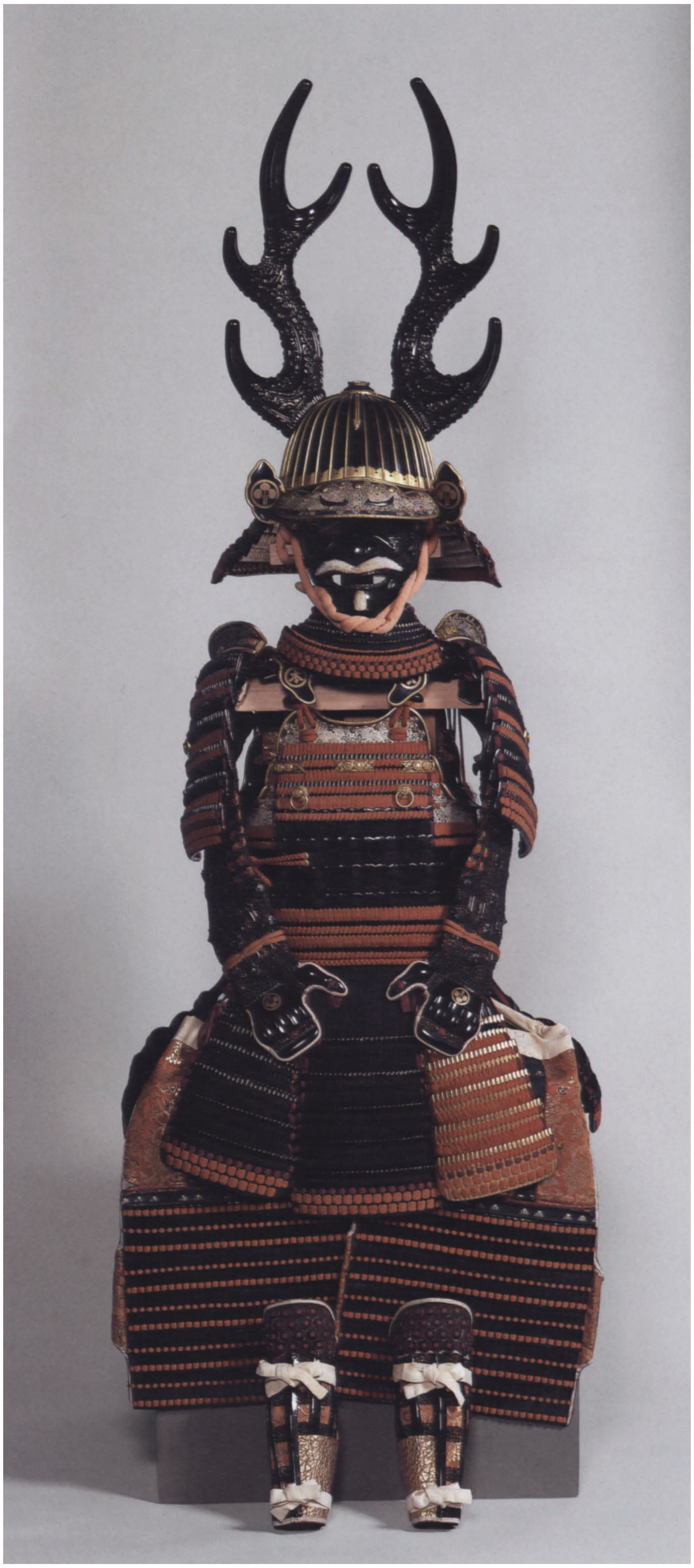
This is an example of an Edo-period armor made to conform to a style established earlier by the first lord of a domain. A small, luxurious armor, this set was made for a child: Honda Tadataka (1698–1709), the seventh generation in the lineage established by Honda Tadakatsu (see cat. no. 11).

The armor has two three-branched stag-antler side crests (*wakidate*) on the helmet, which is of the *suji-bachi* (ridged bowl) type, with ridges edged in gilt copper (*fukurin*). The *fukigaeshi*, the portions of the neck guard that are turned back, are embellished with the Honda family *mon* (insignia)—the *tachi-aoi* (standing hollyhock)—in gold *maki-e* lacquer. The cuirass (*dō*) and shoulder guards (*sode*) are laced in dark blue and red; the *kusazuri* (skirt) is also laced in dark blue except for the front-left section, which is laced in red, with the *sane* (scales) covered with gold leaf: a difference from the armor of the first generation, Tadakatsu, which has black lacing overall. The use of colored lacing limited to the front-left section of the *kusazuri* occurs on many armors belonging to the Hosokawa family, and from this it may be surmised that there was some connection between them and the Honda clan. IH



## 13.

### Black-lacquered *gusoku* armor with five-plate cuirass and dark blue lacing

### 紺糸威五枚胴具足

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Edo period, 16th–17th century
H. of helmet bowl, 14.7 cm (5¾ in.); H. of front of cuirass, 37.7 cm (14⅞ in.)
Sendai City Museum, Miyagi Prefecture
Given by the Kanno Family

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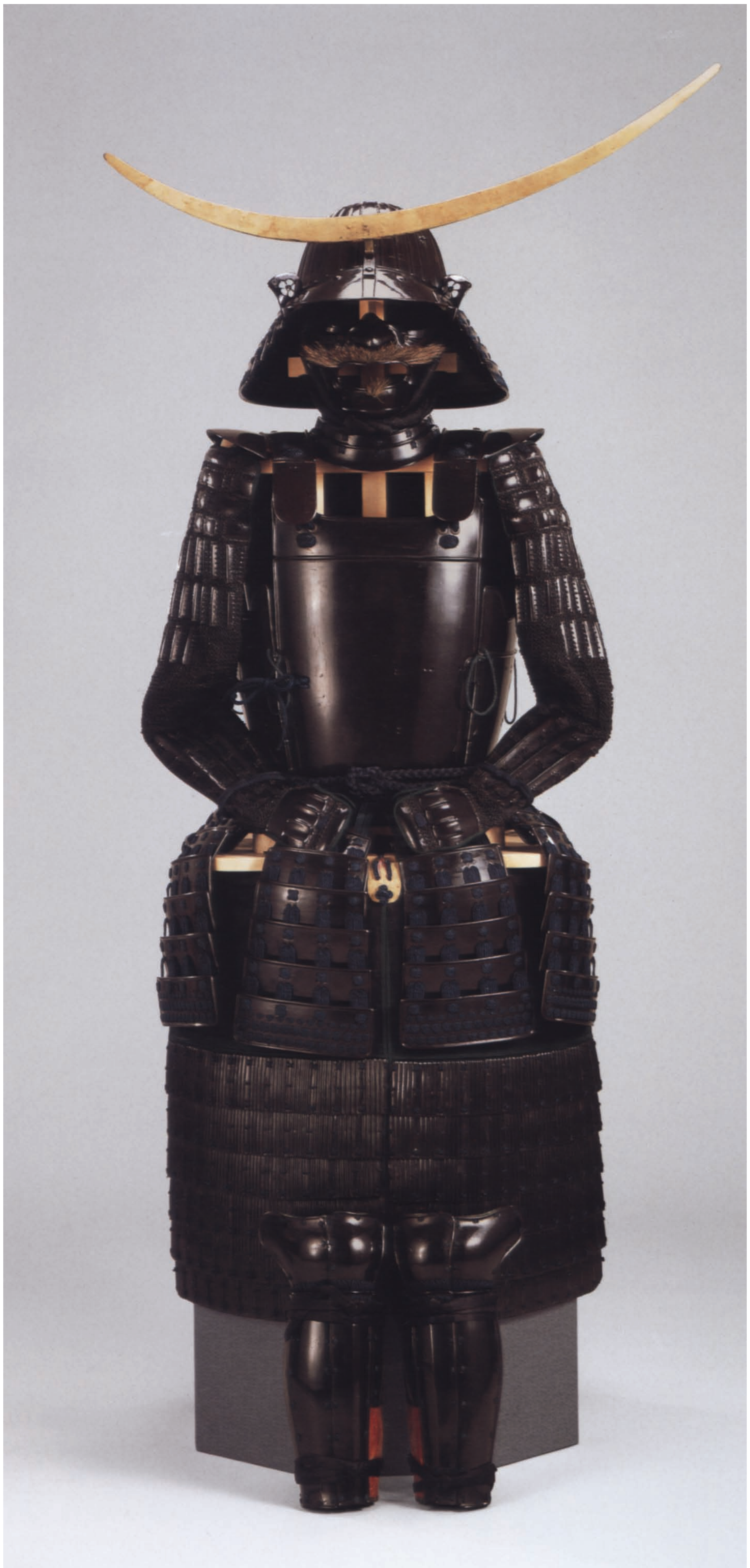
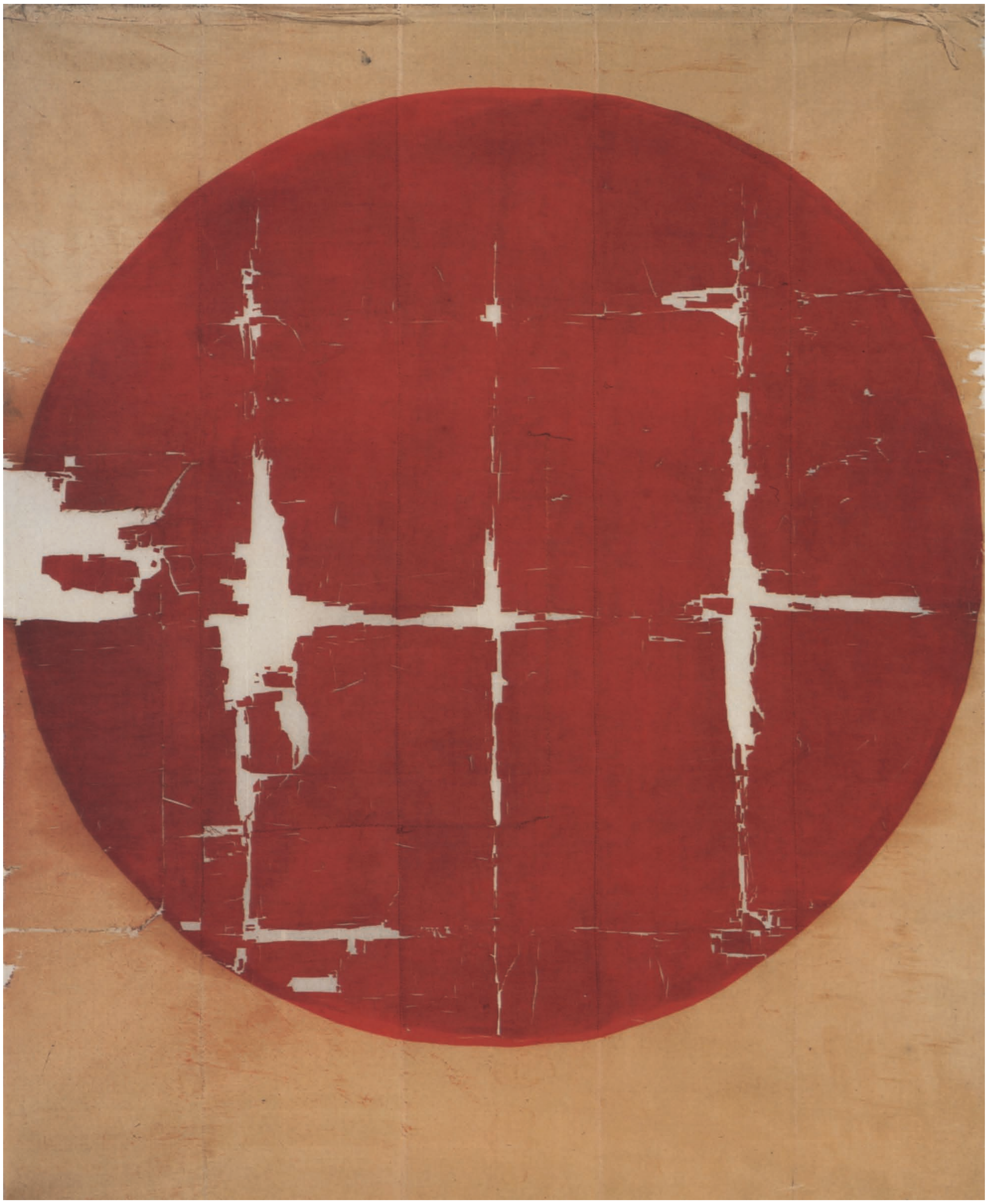
Date Masamune (1567–1636), the lord of Sendai Castle, is perhaps best known as the daimyo who dispatched Hasekura Tsunenaga on a diplomatic mission to Mexico, Spain, and Rome in the eighth year of the Keichō era (1613). Masamune was especially fond of this style of armor and possessed several sets to wear in rotation; the same type was also worn by his retainers. The *dō* (cuirass) is in five sections—the front, left, back, and two sections on the right, used to open it—all of which are held together by hinges, so that the cuirass can be fully disassembled. The *kusazuri* (skirt) comprises nine sections of six horizontal plates each, which are joined with dark blue laces in the *sugake* style (double rows of lacing spaced at intervals). The helmet has a thirty-two-plate ridged bowl inscribed and dated on the back by the armorer, Myōchin Nobuie: *TENBUN YONNEN KINOTO HITSUJI KICHIJITSU HACHIGATSU MYŌCHIN NOBUIE* (*kaō*) ([made by] Myōchin Nobuie, an auspicious day in the eighth month of the fourth year of the Tenbun era [1535]). Another armor of this type is known: it has a ridged helmet made of sixty-two plates and has been passed down in the Date family. Scholarly excavation of the Date tomb has revealed that there is another such helmet buried therein.

The set was given by Masamune to Kanno Shigenari (1596–1636), his close retainer and the personal loader of his matchlock gun, and has been passed down in the Kanno family together with a flag bearing a symbol of the sun (see, e.g., cat. no. 14). IH





**14.**

Flag with sun motif

重要文化財　日の丸旗

Edo period, 17th century
Color on silk
247.7 × 201.5 cm (97½ × 79⅜ in.)
Sendai City Museum, Miyagi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

The sun emblem on this flag was chosen by Terumune—the father of Date Masamune (see cat. no. 13)—and is said to have been modeled on the Kongōkai mandala, a representation of the "Diamond World" of ultimate reality in esoteric Buddhism. The flag is one of six that are heirlooms of the Date family.

KA

## 15.

## *Nanban*-style *gusoku* armor

## 重要文化財 南蛮胴具足

Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, leather, and lacquer
H. of helmet bowl, 27 cm (10⅝ in.);
H. of front of cuirass, 48.5 cm (19⅛ in.)
Kishū Tōshōgū Shrine, Wakayama Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

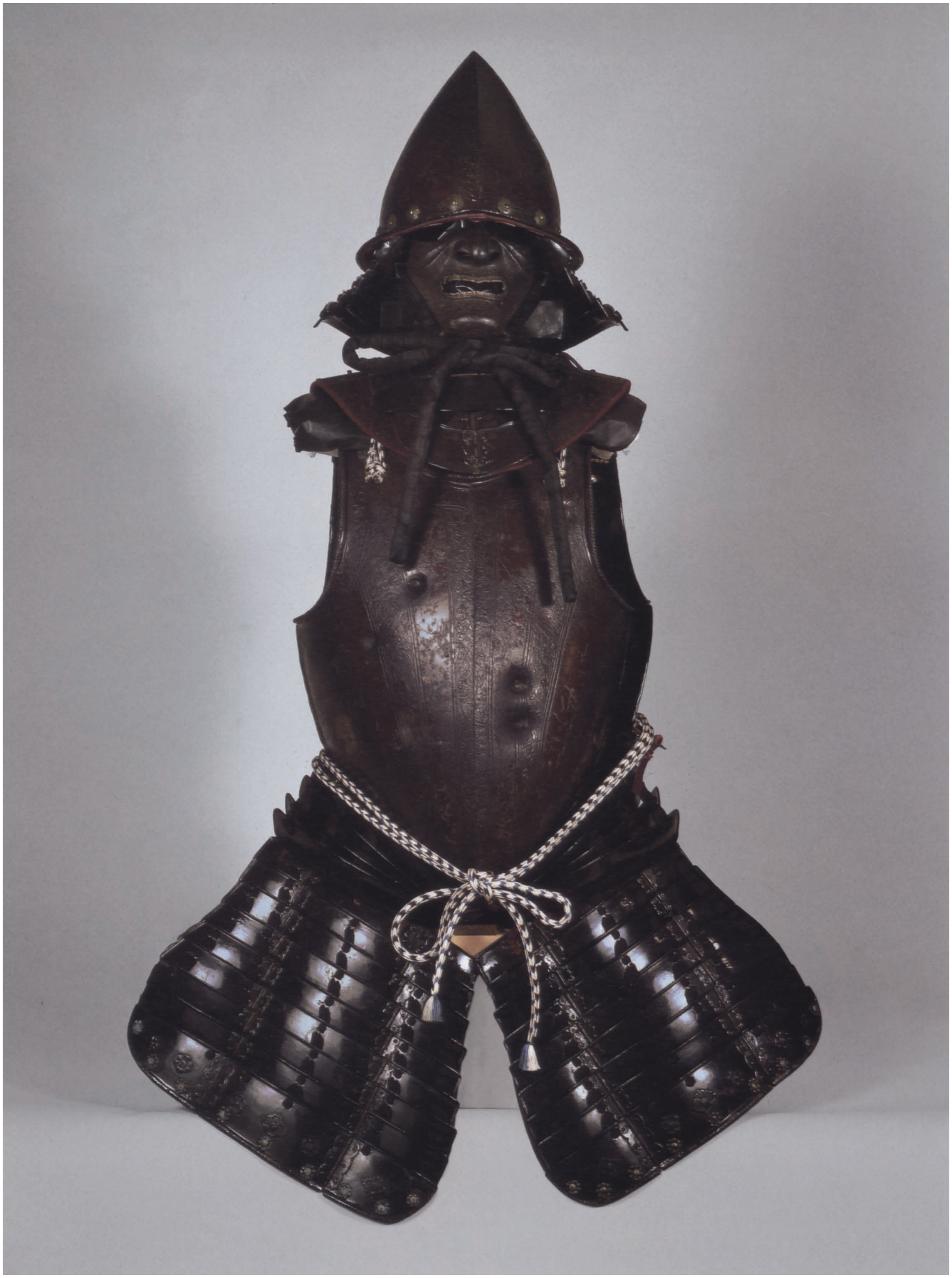
From the second half of the sixteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century, overseas trade brought a variety of foreign goods into Japan. In addition to guns and Christian literature, these items included clothing, such as the *calção* (pantaloons resembling the *hakama*, a traditional style of Japanese pleated trousers) and the mantle; foodstuffs, such as tempura and castella (a type of sponge cake), both introduced by Portuguese missionaries and traders; and European-style armors, which were referred to as *nanban*—literally "southern barbarian," but a term that was applied to many types of imported wares—including the *nanban-dō* (cuirass), *nanban-kabuto* (helmet), and *nanban-bo* (felt caps).

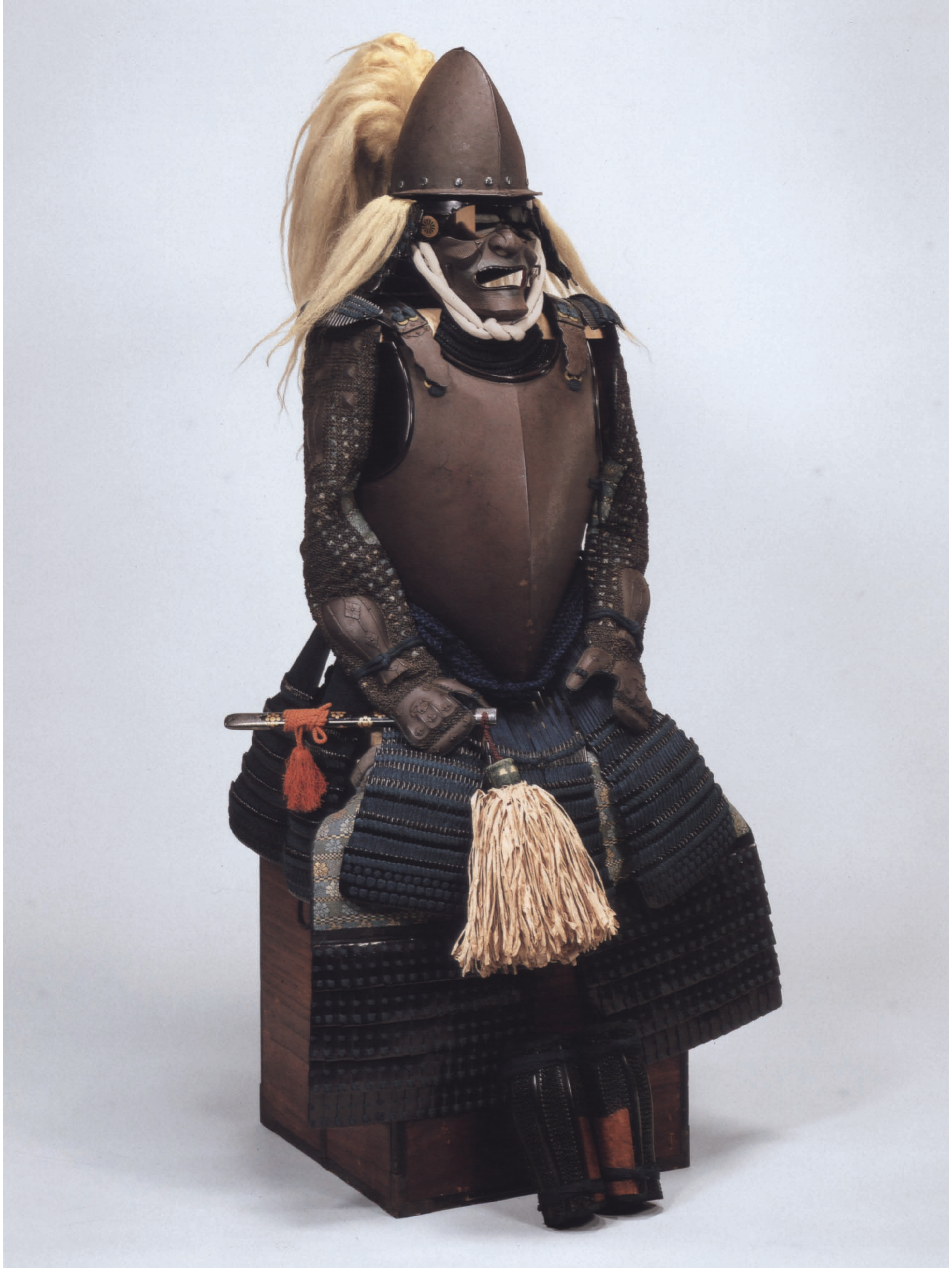
This *nanban* armor was given by Tokugawa Ieyasu to his tenth son, Yorinobu (1602–1671), and has been preserved in the Wakayama Tōshōgū, a shrine dedicated to Ieyasu. The helmet, gorget, and cuirass were originally made in Italy and, while typical of mid- to late sixteenth-century Italian armor in both form and decoration, have been creatively modified to become part of a Japanese armor. The exterior of the helmet is decorated with etched designs, including musical instruments (such as lutes), weapons, and scrollwork: elements that on a European armor would be termed "trophies." The European pieces of the armor were coated with transparent lacquer in Japan; the *shikoro* (neck guard) and *kusazuri* (skirt) were also added in Japan. The overall weight of the set is 18.6 kilograms: the helmet weighs 2.6 kilograms; the front of the cuirass, which was made especially thick, weighs 9.8 kilograms; and the back weighs 2.2 kilograms.

On the front of the cuirass are ten rounded dents known as proof marks, made from musket and pistol shots fired at the cuirass under test conditions to demonstrate that it was bulletproof. On a European armor, there are normally only one or two proof marks. The highly unusual presence of ten marks on the present example suggests that it was tested multiple times, probably in Japan to demonstrate its bullet-stopping capabilities to its new Japanese owners.

The helmet is of a type known in English as a pointed morion and in Italian as a *zuccotto aguzzo*. The cuirass, of the peascod type, has a plunging waistline modeled on the civilian doublets of the day. The helmet, gorget, and cuirass were made in northern Italy about 1570–80, most likely in Milan. There is a similar piece in the collection of the Saga Prefectural Museum, and indeed many such helmets were imported into Japan at this time.

When the Tenshō Ken'ō Shisetsu—the first Japanese mission to Europe—returned to Japan, they were accompanied by the Jesuit priest Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), who on his second visit (beginning in 1590) brought with him letters and gifts from Aleixo de Menezes, the Spanish viceroy of Portugal. In the third month of the following year, Valignano had an audience with Toyotomi Hideyoshi at the Jurakudai, Hideyoshi's palace at Fushimi, in Kyōto. Portuguese missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597), at the beginning of his book *The History of Japan*, relates that Valignano gave Hideyoshi "two splendid white [meaning plate] armors beautifully decorated with metal gold fittings," described as made in Milan. This armor is quite probably of the same type as those. IH





## 16.

## *Gusoku* armor with *nanban*-style cuirass and helmet

## 重要文化財 南蛮胴具足

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, lacquer, silk, and yak hair
H. of helmet bowl, 23 cm (9 in.); W. of neck guard, 15.5 cm (6⅛ in.); W. of cuirass, 46 cm (18⅛ in.); H. of skirt, 20.5 cm (8⅛ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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This armor was given by Tokugawa Ieyasu to Sakakibara Yasumasa, a Momoyama-period military commander and one of Ieyasu's most trusted retainers (see cat. no. 18). Until quite recently the armor was still a possession of the Sakakibara family, whose records preserve the following description: "In the year 1600, just before the Battle of Sekigahara, Ieyasu praised Yasumasa for his loyal service and presented him with an armor brought by the *nanban* ["southern barbarians," usually referring to Europeans]. It was one of six in all of Japan."

The bowl of the helmet comprises two iron plates, left and right, whereas European helmets of this type almost always have a one-piece bowl. In addition, the crown of this type of helmet should point forward, whether made in Europe or Japan. This oddity, coupled with the two-piece construction, suggest the helmet was made in the European style in India, China, or elsewhere and then imported into Japan. A plume of yak-tail hair is inserted into a copper holder fixed to the back of the helmet, in a European fashion. The hair of the tail of the yak (a type of Tibetan ox) was an extremely valuable imported commodity at the time.

The cuirass, made of iron, is hinged at the right side. It has a ridge at the front, and both sides flare upward. The back is short, in the European style, but the overall finish and the use of the hinge suggest that the cuirass may have been made in Japan. The armor incorporates *ko-gusoku* ("smaller pieces"), including a *hō-ate* (half-mask), *kote* (sleeves), *haidate* (thigh guards), and *shino-suneate* (shin defenses). The helmet weighs 2.1 kilograms; the cuirass weighs 8.5 kilograms; and the overall weight, including the *ko-gusoku*, is 14.5 kilograms. The two *Genji-guruma mon* (the "Wheel of Genji," the Sakakibara family's hereditary insignia) in *maki-e* lacquer on the left and right sides of the helmet are unlikely to have been on the helmet when it was received from Ieyasu and thus are probably later additions. IH

## 17.

## *Nimai-dō gusoku* armor with black lacing; *umajirushi* (camp standard); and *sashimono* (personal flag)

## 重要文化財
## 黒糸威二枚胴具足、附指物・馬印

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Momoyama period, 17th century
Armor: Iron, lacquer, and silk
H. of helmet bowl, 14.5 cm (5¾ in.);
H. of cuirass, 39 cm (15⅜ in.)
*Umajirushi*: papier-mâché and gold
62 × 60 cm (24⅜ × 23⅝ in.)
*Sashimono*: silk and gold leaf
156 × 73 cm (61⅜ × 28¾ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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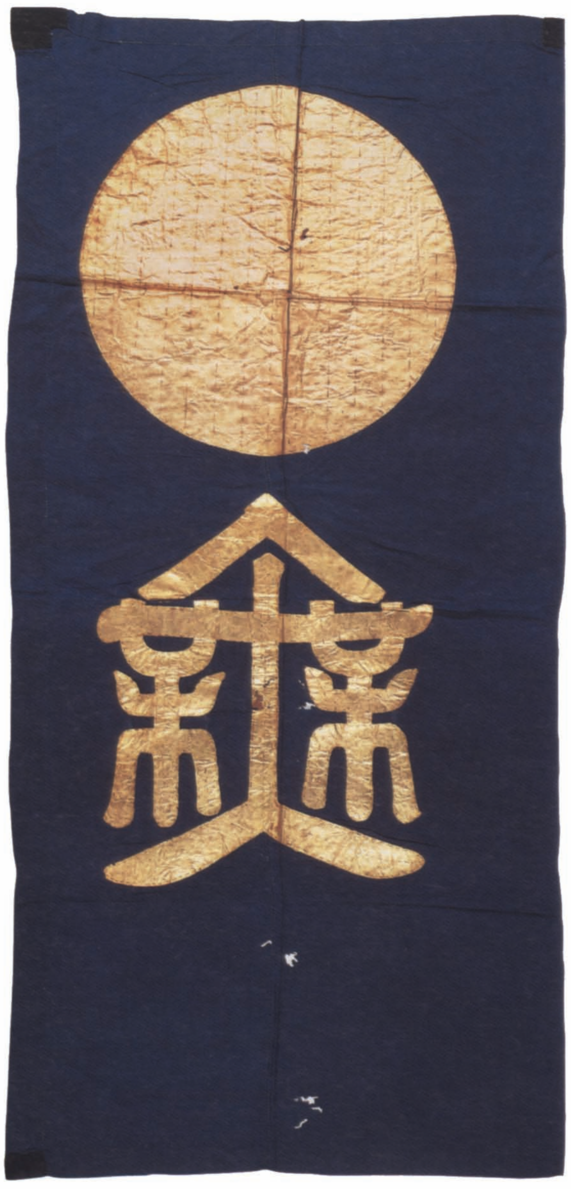
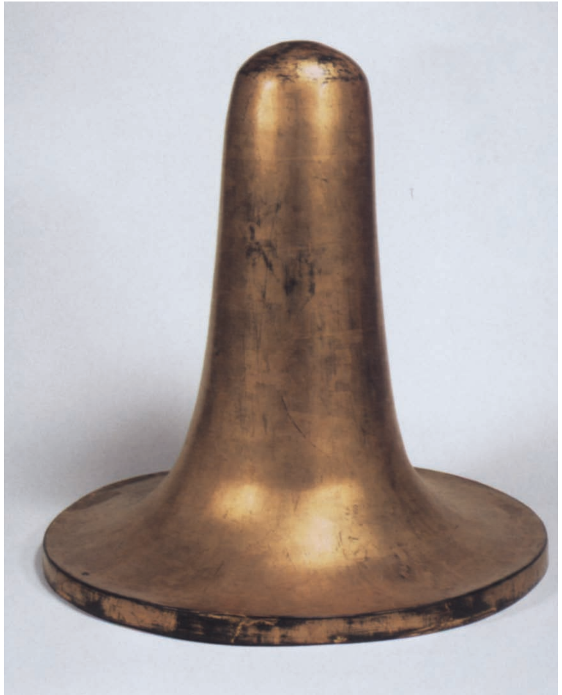
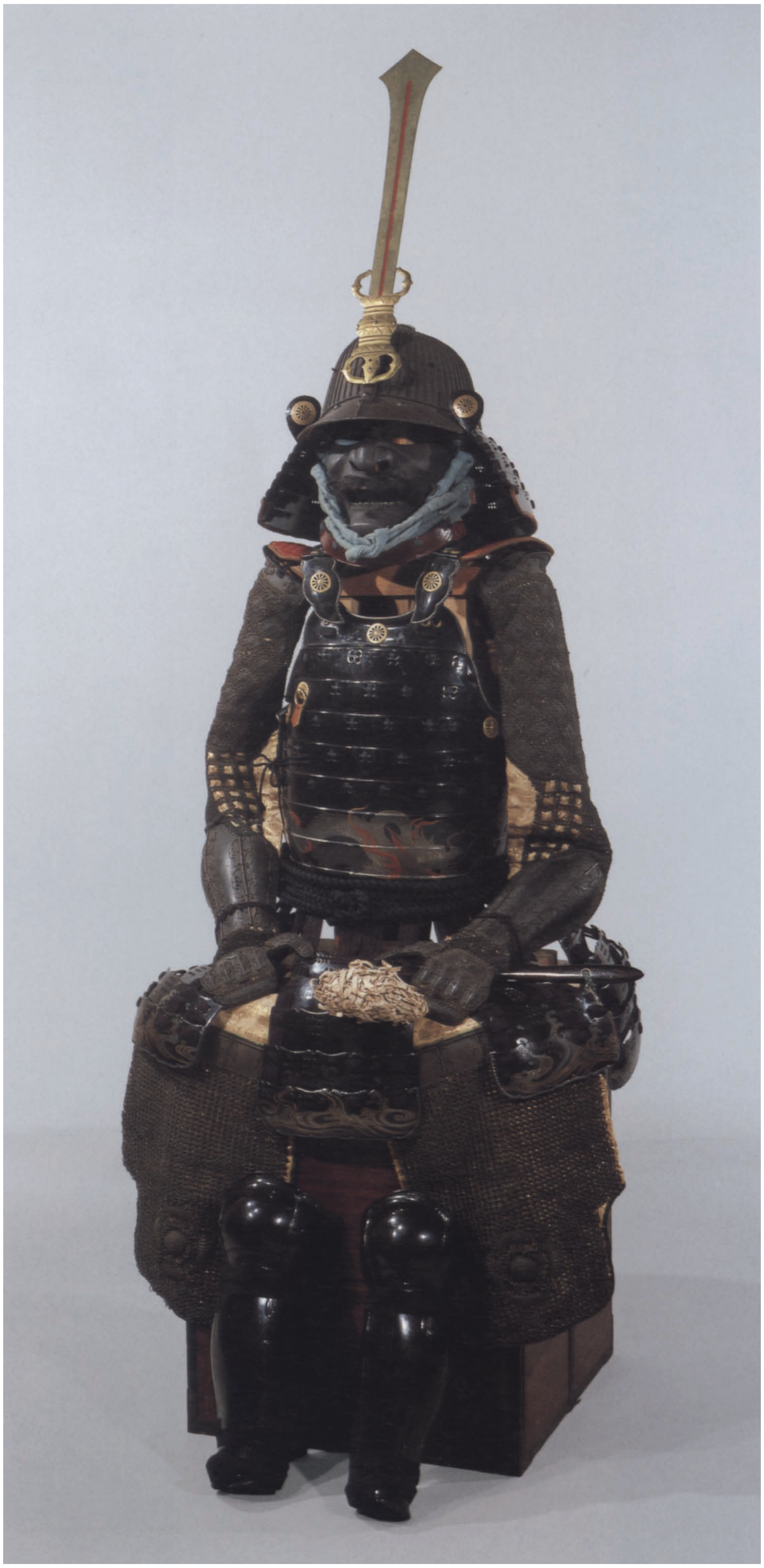
This armor belonged to Sakakibara Yasumasa, one of the Shi-Tennō, the "Four Trusted Retainers" of Tokugawa Ieyasu (see cat. no. 18). The helmet is a sixty-two-plate *suji-bachi* (ridged bowl) inscribed on the interior with the name of the maker: YOSHIMICHI SAKU ("made by Yoshimichi"). The cuirass is a black-lacquered *nimai-dō* (two-piece cuirass), formed of plates linked with offset joints, with a *kusazuri* (skirt) consisting of seven sections of five plates each. The chest and portions of the sleeves covering the backs of the hands are embellished with applied *Genji-guruma*: the "Wheel of Genji," the Sakakibara family *mon* (hereditary insignia). Although the set is a basic black armor, the front of the helmet has a *maedate* (frontal crest) in the form of a gilt-bronze *ken*-type sword (double edged and straight) with a hilt in the shape of a *vajra* (thunderbolt, a Buddhist symbol). A dragon is depicted across the lower portion of the front of the cuirass in silver *kanagai* (small, cut-out pieces of thin foil) and gold *maki-e*. Rising waves are depicted on the bottom two plates of the *kusazuri*. Originally the *shikoro* (neck guard) and *kusazuri* both had black lacings; the purple ones in place now are replacements. The armor was preserved until quite recently by the Sakakibara family together with the portrait of Yasumasa (cat. no. 18) and his personal flag, discussed below.


*Sashimono*


*Umajirushi*



The *umajirushi* (a type of standard) was mounted on a long pole and placed near the military commander's horse in the line of battle to indicate his position, hence the name, which literally means "horse sign." The shape of the Sakakibara family *umajirushi*, which resembles a trumpet opening downward, is known as *kikyo* after its resemblance to the Chinese bellflower. It was made using *kanshitsu* ("dried lacquer," a kind of papier-mâché) and other materials covered in gold foil. The *sashimono* (personal flag) of Yasumasu, which can be seen in the portrait, shows the sun and the character *mu* ("nothingness") in gold on a dark blue silk ground.

ST

## 18.

## Sakakibara Yasumasa

## 重要文化財 絹本着色榊原康政像

Edo period, 17th century
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
112 × 46 cm (44⅛ × 18⅛ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

The warrior Sakakibara Yasumasa (1548–1606), an important retainer to both Tokugawa Ieyasu and his successor, Hidetada, was one of the Shi-Tennō, the "Four Trusted Retainers" of the Tokugawa. After distinguishing himself in numerous military campaigns, in the eighteenth year of the Tenshō era (1590), when Ieyasu established his headquarters in Edo, Yasumasa was made lord of Tatebayashi Castle in Kōzuke province (present-day Gunma Prefecture) and given an income of one hundred thousand *koku* (a measure of volume of rice: 1 *koku* equals about 180 liters).

The portrait shows him seated on a bearskin rug wearing a *moegi*-colored undergarment (literally "sprouting onion," *moegi* is a yellowy green) beneath a type of armor referred to as a *kuro-ito odoshi nimai-dō gusoku* (black silk-laced two-part cuirass armor). It is similar to catalogue number 17: in particular, the front of the *dō* (cuirass) and the *kusazuri* (skirt) are embellished, respectively, with the same dragon and rising sea-wave motifs, and the *maedate* (frontal crest) of his *suji-kabuto* (ridged helmet) has a motif of a *ken*-type sword with a *vajra* hilt. On his left side, Yasumasa wears a *tachi*-type sword, whose scabbard is almost wholly clad in *fukurin* (gilt edging), and a rather long *koshigatana*; both scabbards are secured by a red *sageo* (cord). His right hand, sheathed in a tanned-leather glove, holds a *saihai* (command baton). Behind him is a flag with a sun and the character *mu* ("nothingness"), a differently colored version of the one in this exhibition (see cat. no. 17). The painting and armor were both preserved in the Sakakibara house.

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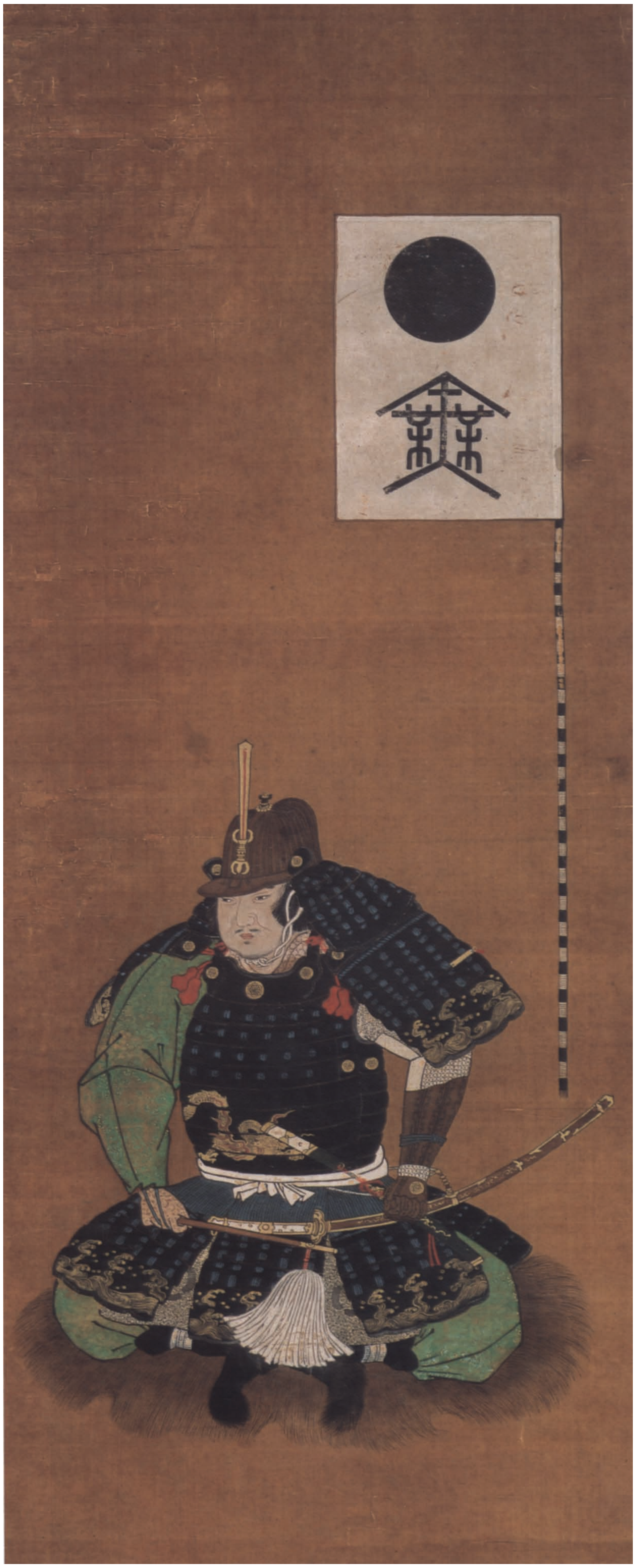


### 19.

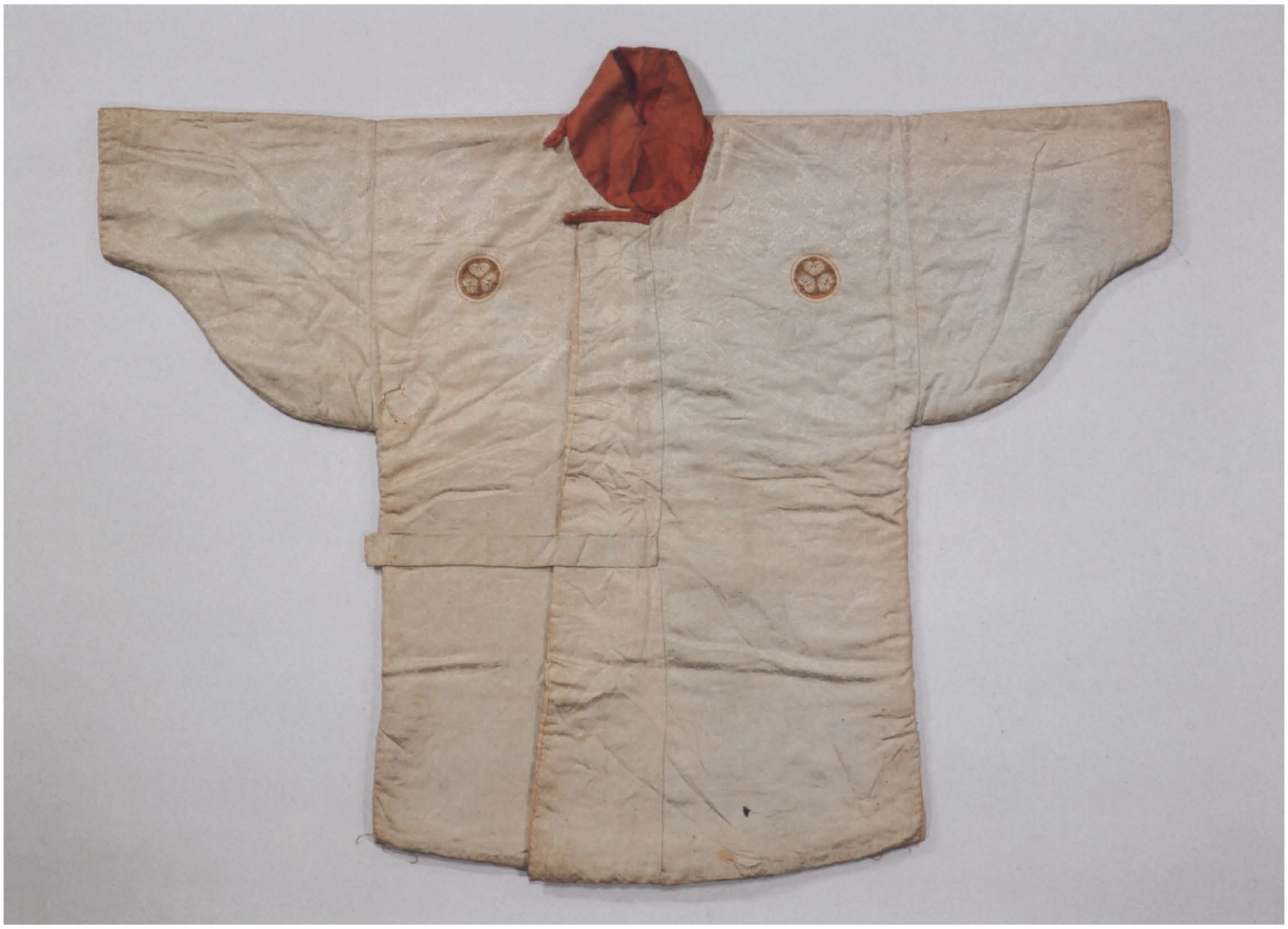
## Arming jacket for a *gusoku* armor with *tsujigahana*-dyed hollyhock *mon* (insignia)

淡浅葱綸子地葵紋付鎧下着 1領

Momoyama period, 17th century
Silk and pigments
L. 89 cm (35 in.); W. at shoulders, 64 cm (25¼ in.); W. overall, 128 cm (50⅜ in.); sleeves, 37 × 33 cm (14⅝ × 13 in.); W. of collar, 9.2 cm (3⅝ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

This garment, which was worn beneath a *gusoku*-type armor, is said to have been given to Sakakibara Yasumasa (see cat. no. 18) by Tokugawa Ieyasu and was handed down in the Sakakibara family. The exterior is a pale blue woven silk decorated with a lotus pattern of small flowering sprigs. The lining is plain white silk with cotton wadding. The high, rounded collar is decorated with Chinese flowers (chrysanthemums and orchids) on a red woven silk ground and is provided with a loop and button. The garment opens at the front, where there are lapels and a lateral band of the same cloth.

The sleeves are curved, a European influence unique to the Momoyama period, and the cuffs taper. On both sides under the sleeve openings are holes for lacing. The armpits are open on both sides, and the back has a vent. On the breasts, sleeves, and back are triple hollyhock *mon*—the insignia of the Tokugawa family—depicted in roundels using the *tsujigahana* technique, in which silk is painted, basted with thread, knotted, dipped in dye baths, and then rinsed repeatedly. The *mon* are outlined in black ink, while the surrounds and hollyhock leaves are left in white. ST



## 20.

## *Gusoku* armor with multicolored lacing and *dō* (cuirass) in flesh-colored lacquer

## 金小札色々威片脱胴具足

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Momoyama period, late 16th–17th century
Iron, silk, lacquer, gold, and bear fur
H. of helmet bowl, 16 cm (6¼ in.);
H. of cuirass, 39.9 cm (15¾ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

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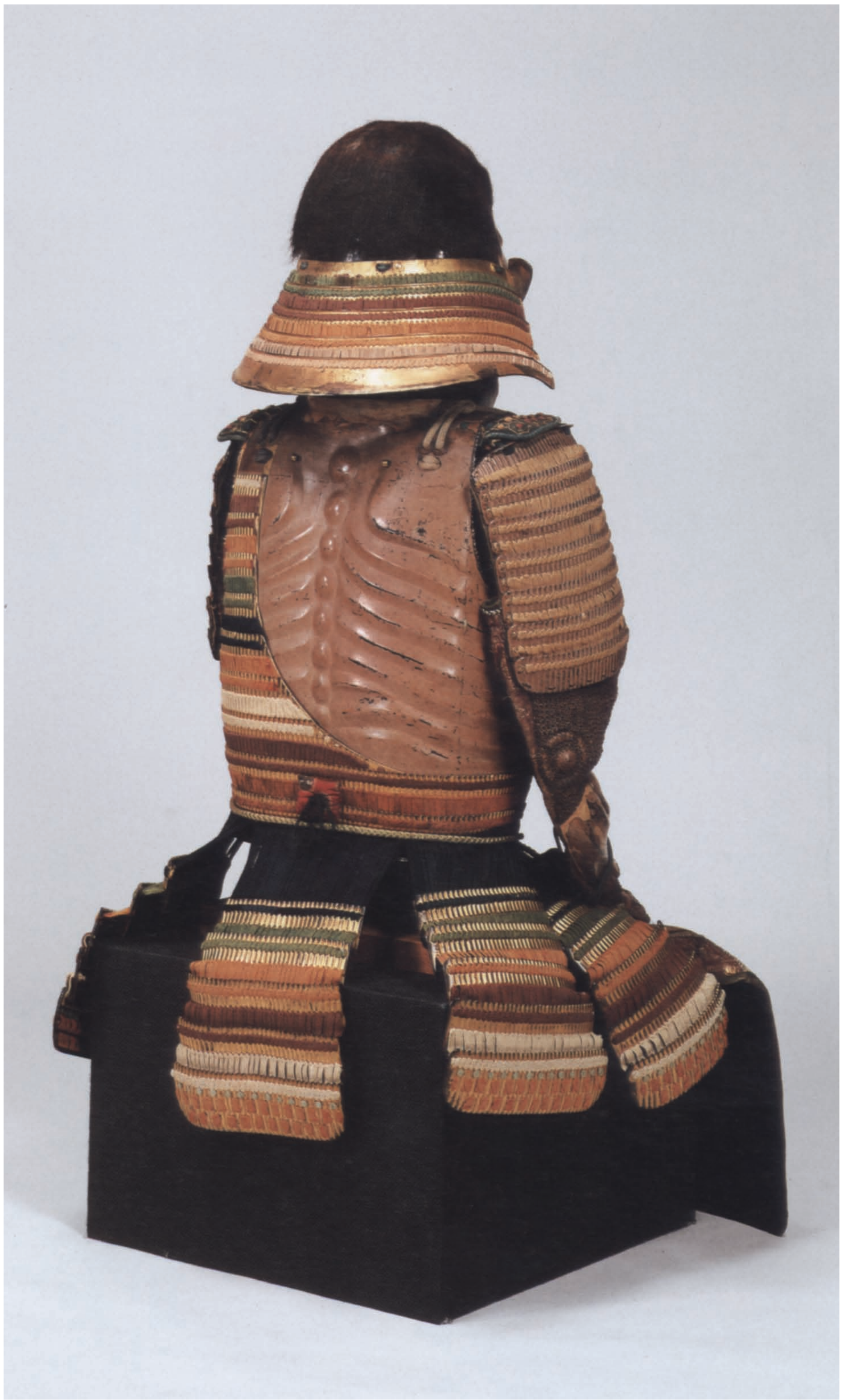
The realism of the hair and body and the extravagant lacing of this armor reflect the sometimes unconventional tastes of samurai in the Momoyama period. The bear fur covering the helmet, for example, simulates an actual head of hair, while the brow has large eyebrows and wrinkles executed in repoussé and lacquered a flesh color. Part of the cuirass (*dō*) is also lacquered a flesh color and embossed to simulate an exposed right shoulder, breast, and ribs, with the backbone visible at the back. The rest of the cuirass comprises ***kittsutkezane*** (solid plates made to resemble rows of linked ***kozane*** scales) that are covered with gold and linked with purple, crimson, green, and dark blue lacings. The ***hō-ate*** (half-mask) and ***kote*** (sleeves) are flesh-colored as well. The left ***sode*** (shoulder guard) has multicolored lacing, while the right has lacing that approximates the flesh color of the cuirass.

IH



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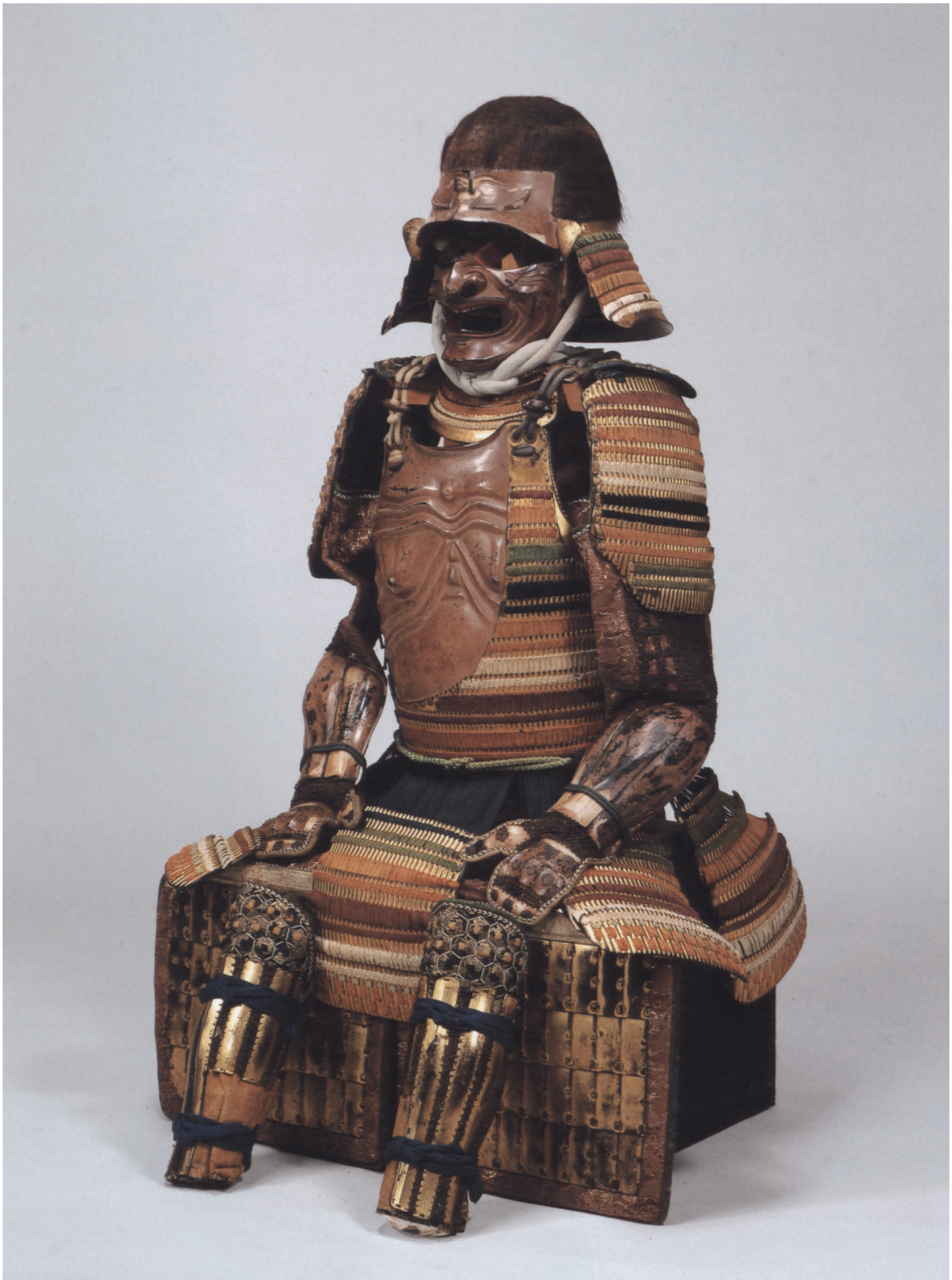

## 21.

## *Ni-ō dō gusoku* (Buddhist guardian deity armor) with red lacing

## 紅糸威二王胴具足

Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, leather, lacquer, braid, thread, and animal hair
H. of cuirass, 35 cm (13¾ in.); H. of helmet bowl, 14 cm (5½ in.)
Ishikawa-ken History Museum,
Ishikawa Prefecture

The cuirass (*dō*) of this armor is made to simulate the nude torso—including embossed ribs and breasts—of a Buddhist guardian deity, or *Ni-ō*. It is in two sections (*nimai-dō*) and is embellished with gold leaf pressed onto a *tataki-nuri* surface, made by stippling lacquer to create an uneven or pebbled texture. The lacing is red. The sixty-two-plate, russet-iron *suji-kabuto* (ridged helmet) is inscribed by the maker, Myōchin Yoshitsugu, and has a red fur *kabuto-mino*: a type of wig named after the *mino*, a traditional straw cloak.

The *Ni-ō dō* is a distinctive armor that at first glance might be considered somewhat amusing. Yet despite the richly decorative, even fanciful style, there was no loss of practical function, and indeed it is believed that such armors were made specifically to attract attention. Their manufacture required sophisticated techniques, however, and consequently there are few extant examples. This one is a prototype Kaga *gusoku*, so named because the armor reflects the unique tastes of the lord of the Kaga Maeda domain, as established in the seventeenth century by Toshitsune, the third-generation lord of the Maeda clan. It is made of well-forged iron, reflecting the highest-level technology of the period, and is vividly finished in silver, gold, and lacquer. Murai Nagase, a retainer of the Kaga domain and the ancestor-founder of the Murai clan, received this armor from a close retainer of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

ST

## 22.

## *Nimai-dō gusoku* armor with red lacquer and smoked-leather lacing

## 燻韋威二枚胴具足 兜·小具足付

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Momoyama period, 17th century
Iron, leather, lacquer, wood, and gold
H. of helmet bowl, 14.3 cm (5⅝ in.);
H. of cuirass, 42 cm (16½ in.)
Hikone Castle Museum, Shiga Prefecture

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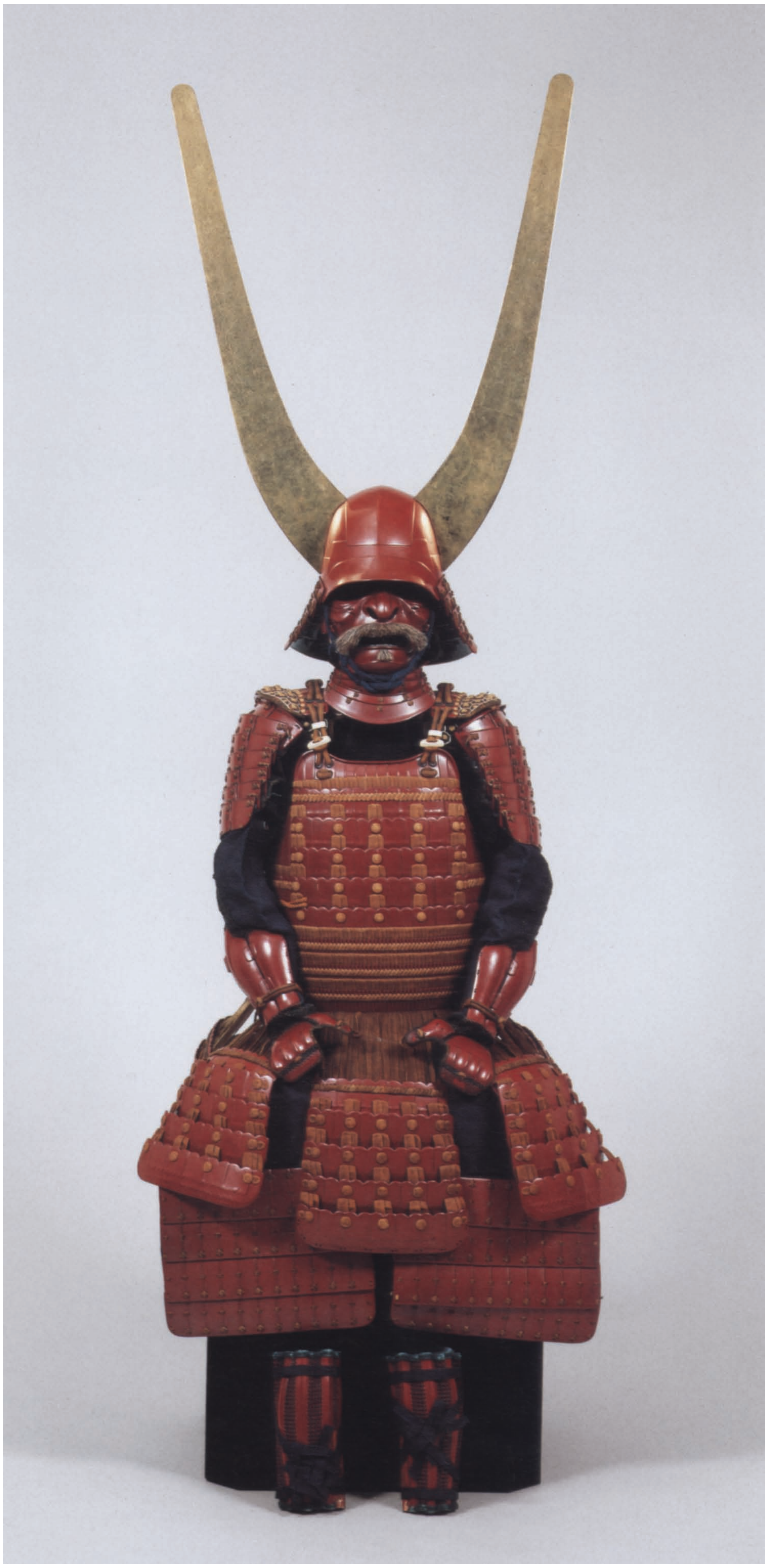
From the helmet and cuirass to the *kote* (sleeves), *haidate* (thigh defenses), and *sune-ate* (shin defenses), this *gusoku* armor is completely covered in red lacquer. The spectacular *wakidate* (side crests) on the helmet, a type known as *tentsuki* (high-reaching or, literally, "heaven-piercing"), are made of wood covered with gold leaf, creating an eye-catching contrast to the red. The style was established by the first generation of the Ii clan, Naomasa (1561–1602), and was worn by subsequent generations of the family. The armors of the Ii retainers were also red, as were the clan's banners and *umajirushi* ("horse sign," a type of camp standard; see, e.g., cat. no. 17). Together they were renowned as *Ii no akazonae* ("the red equipment of Ii").

This set is recorded as having been owned by Ii Naotaka (1590–1659), the second generation of the lords of the Hikone *han* (domain) of Shiga Prefecture. The armor comprises a simple *zunari* ("head-shaped") helmet with a *nimai-dō* (two-part cuirass), which is hinged on the left side so that it closes on the right. It is laced with *fusubegawa*: deerskin smoked to a brown color using straw. Naotaka was a retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu and, following his military achievements in the summer campaign at Ōsaka Castle, in 1615, he also served the second shogun, Hidetada (r. 1605–23), as well as the third, Iemitsu (r. 1623–51). IH



## 23.

## Leather-clad *nimai-dō gusoku* armor with light blue lacing

## 浅葱糸威革包二枚胴具足

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Edo period, 17th century
Iron, leather, lacquer, and silk
H. of cuirass, 42.5 cm (16¾ in.); H. of helmet bowl, 18.5 cm (7¼ in.)
Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of History

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The *kawari-kabuto* (exotic helmet) of this armor is a black-lacquered *tōkan-nari*, or "Chinese crown" type: as *wakidate* (side crests), it has two large pieces on the right and left, known as *ei*, whose shape derives from the tie cords on ancient Chinese crowns. The crests are clad in silver foil. The *shikoro* (neck guard), which is in the *hineno* style (see cat. no. 34), has black-lacquered plates with white lacing. The armor is equipped with *ō-sode* (large shoulder guards) with light blue lacing.

The *nimai-dō* (two-piece cuirass) is clad in dyed leather decorated with stenciled floral motifs, white lacing, and separate iron *kozane* (small scales) arranged over the front *tate-age* (upper section). The *kusazuri* (skirt) has vermilion-lacquered *kozane* and eleven sections, like a *dō-maru* armor. The black-lacquered *haidate*, the lower portion of the skirt, which comprises linked *sane*, has large rabbits depicted in gold leaf. The rabbits can be considered part of a matching design along with the *wakidate*, which are often compared to rabbit's ears. In Asia, the rabbit, as a sign of the zodiac, is a symbol of longevity.

The armor is said to have been owned by Wakisaka Yasumoto (1584–1653), son of Yasuharu (1554–1626), lord of Ozu, in Iyo province (present-day Ehime Prefecture).

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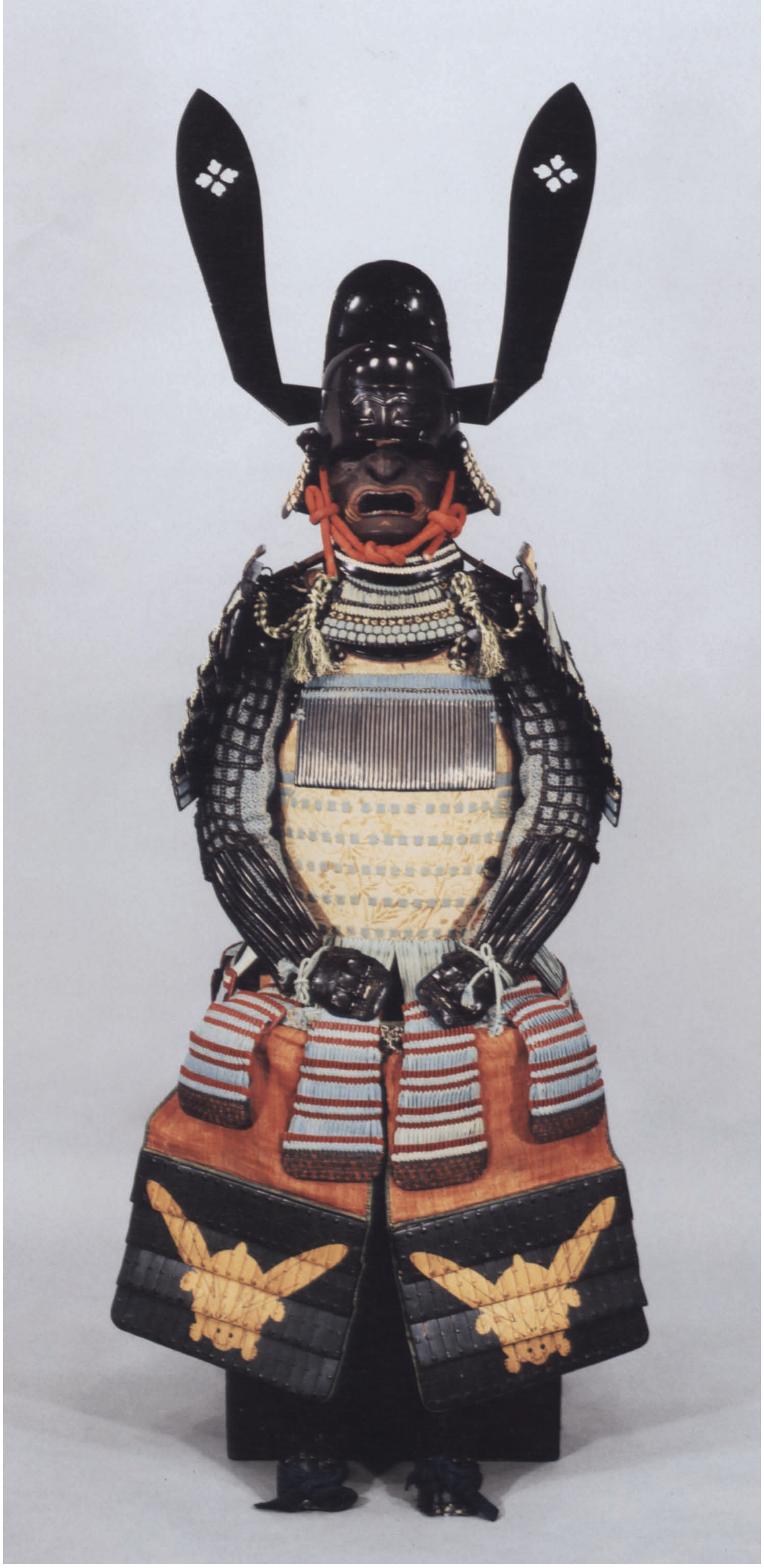

## 24.

## *Nimai-dō gusoku* armor with *tatewaku*-pattern lacing

## 縦涌文威二枚胴具足

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Edo period, 18th century
Iron, gold, leather, lacquer, and silk
H. of cuirass, 37 cm (14⅝ in.)
Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama Prefecture

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This armor was owned by Yoneko, the first wife of Ikeda Harumasa, lord of Okayama domain, in Bizen province (present-day Okayama Prefecture). An outstanding example of an armor made for a woman, the set reflects the best available metalworking, lacquering, and dyeing techniques of the Edo period. The black-lacquered *sane* (scales) of the cuirass, sleeves, and skirt are laced in red, white, light green, and purple, forming a *tatewaku* pattern, or opposed, wavy columns. The design was popular in clothing intended for the nobility but is rarely seen on an armor. It was made by finely adjusting the amount of lace passing through the holes in the individual scales. The helmet is a *hoshi-bachi* (riveted bowl) with gilt rims. The *muna-ita* (upper breastplate) and *waki-ita* (side plates) are decorated with peonies in gold *maki-e*.

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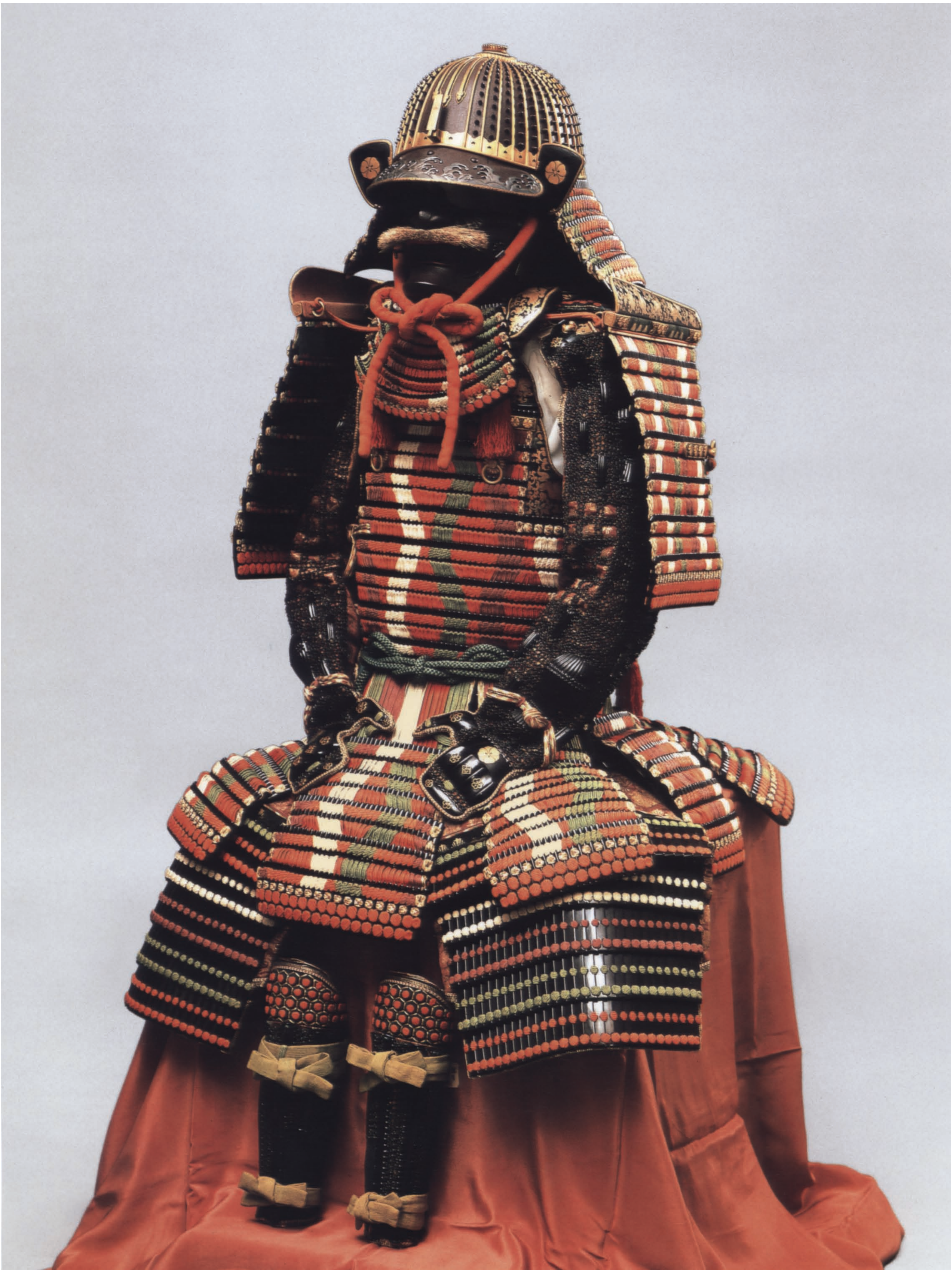


## 25.

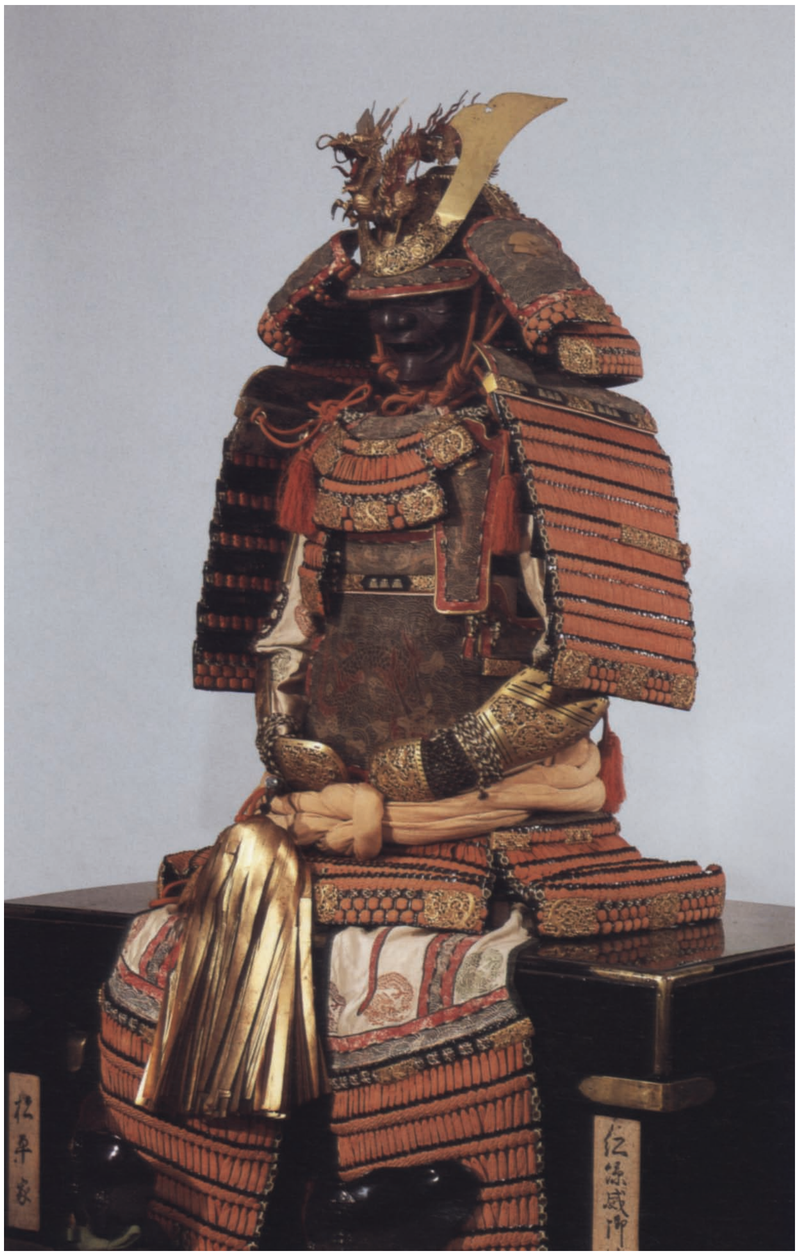
### *Yoroi* armor with red lacing

### 紅糸威鎧

Edo period, 1839
Iron, *shakudō*, gold, leather, lacquer, and silk
H. of helmet bowl, 14.8 cm (5⅞ in.); H. of cuirass, 30 cm (11⅞ in.)
Sakai City Museum, Ōsaka

The eighth-generation Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune (1684–1751), commissioned numerous reproductions of Kamakura-period *ō-yoroi* armors. Subsequently, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a fashion emerged for armors modeled on the *ō-yoroi* of the Heian and Kamakura periods. This set is representative of these "revival"-style *ō-yoroi*, with its stenciled-leather cuirass, *hoshi-bachi* helmet with a dragon crest, and shoulder guards comprising seven hanging rows, each laced in red. Other components include the *hō-ate* (half-mask), *nodowa* (throat protection), *kote* (sleeves), *haidate* (thigh protection), and *sune-ate* (shin defenses). It is believed that the dyed leather of the cuirass was inspired by the dragon-among-waves design on the armor with black-tanned leather and red lacing in the collection of the Itsukushima Jinja, a shrine in present-day Hiroshima Prefecture, and that the *kote* were modeled on Kamakura-period examples in the Kasuga-taisha, in Nara (cat. no. 4). The metal fittings include pieces decorated with plum boughs and *mon* (insignia) of overlapping open fans.

The armor, which reflects the highest-level Edo-period craftsmanship, is accompanied by a record of the armorer, who made it in the tenth year of the Tenpō era (1839). It is said to have belonged to Matsudaira Tonomonokami, lord of Shimabara domain (in present-day Nagasaki Prefecture), a provenance confirmed by the overlapping fans, the *mon* of his family. IH



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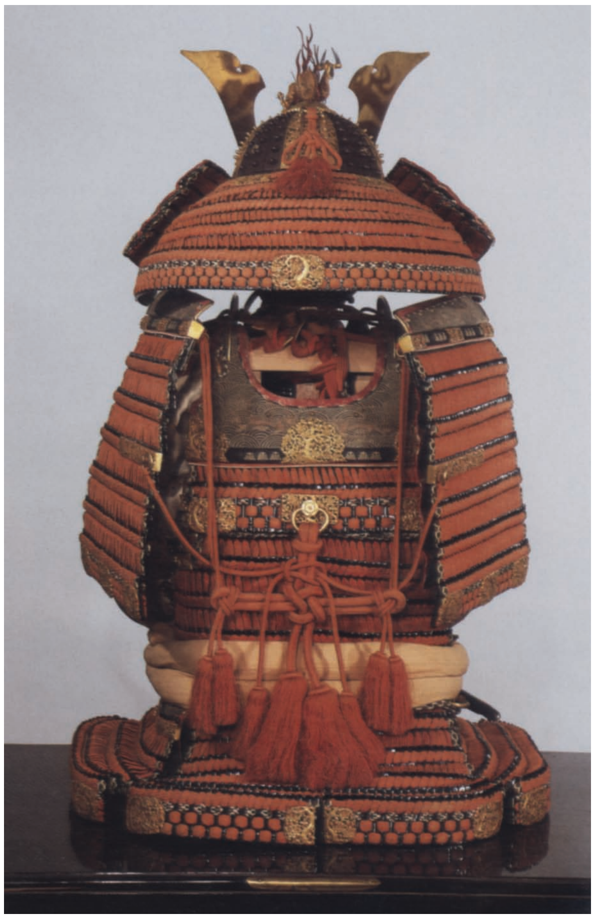
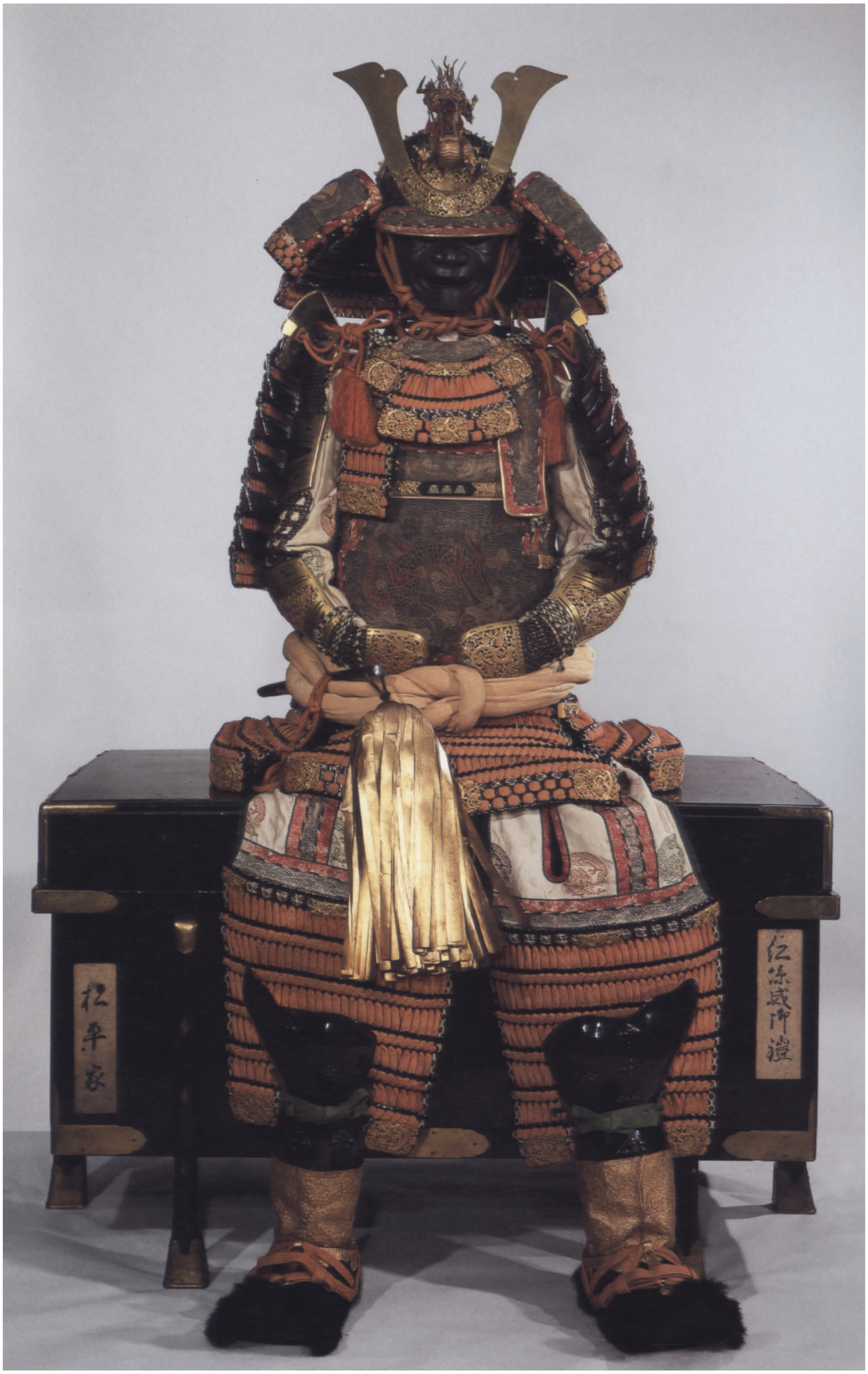



紅絲威御鎧
松平家

## 26.

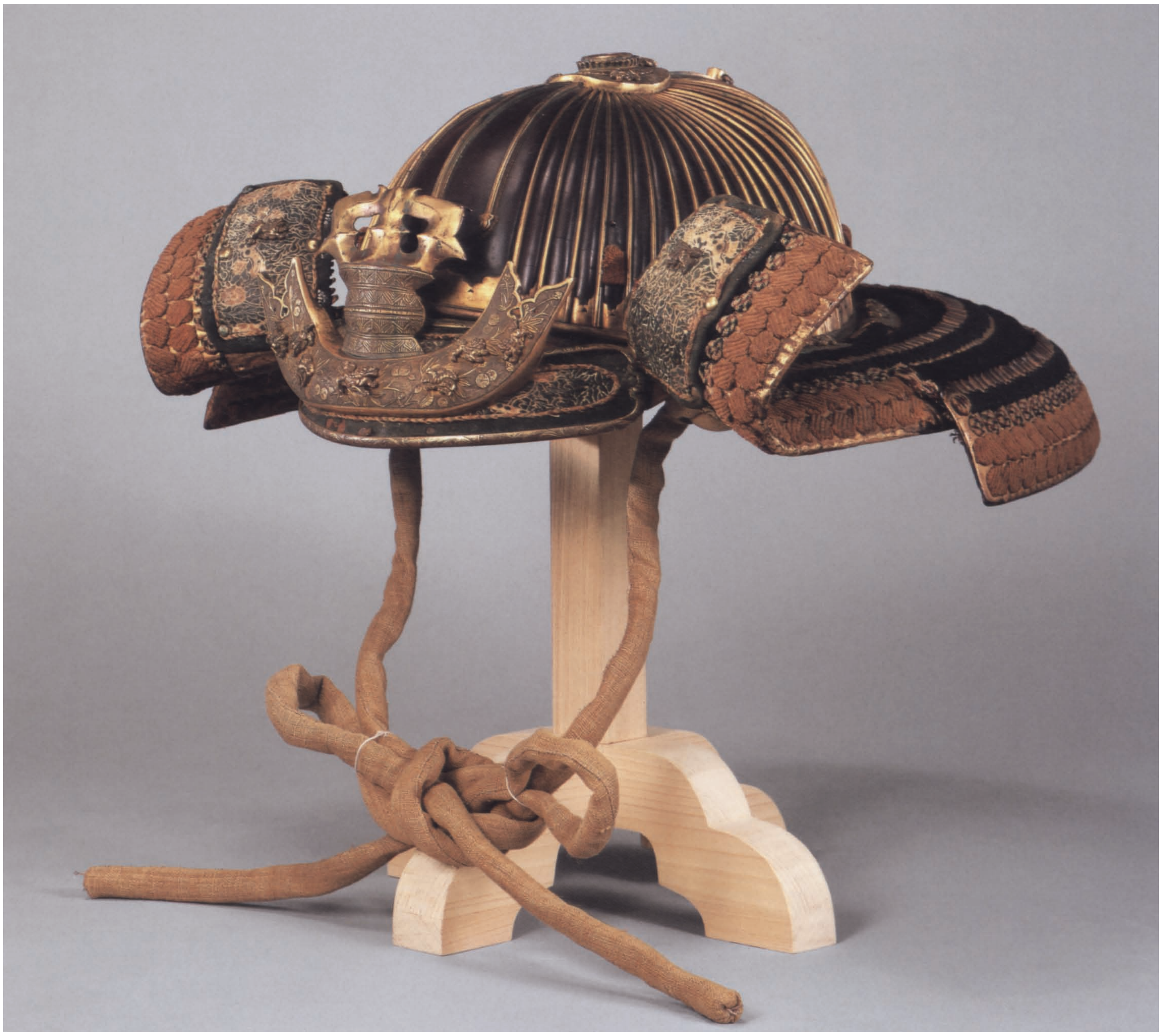
## *Hoshi-kabuto* (riveted helmet) with twenty-eight plates

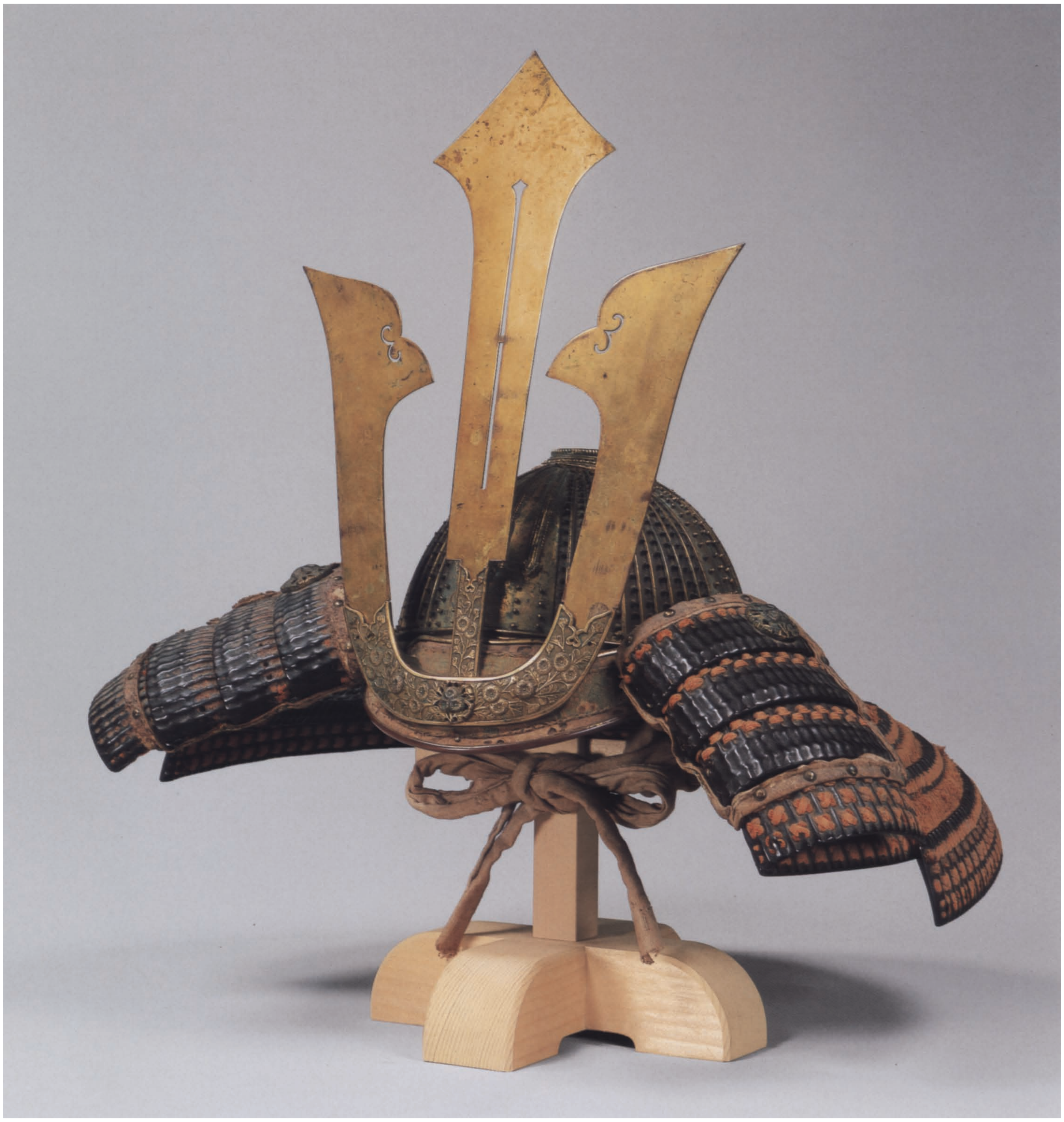
重要文化財
鉄二十八間四方白星兜

Kamakura period, 13th century
Iron, lacquer, dyed leather, braid, and cord
H. 9.4 cm (3¾ in.); W. front to back, 21.2 cm (8⅜ in.); W. left to right, 20 cm (7⅞ in.)
Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History
**Important Cultural Property**

This is a fine example of one of the few surviving helmets from the Kamakura period. The bowl comprises twenty-eight iron plates joined together in a hemispheric (*daienzan*) shape. It has gilt-copper sheets beneath *shinodare* (arrow shapes) at the front, back, left, and right: a form referred to as *shihō jiro*. The helmet is believed to have originally accompanied a *yoroi* armor. The *shikoro* (neck guard), which has been replaced in recent years, is large and expansive, typical of Kamakura-period pieces, and the *fukigaeshi* (the parts that are turned back) curve outward abruptly at left and right in lengthy protrusions.

The overlapping portions of the edges of the iron plates are folded over to form ridges (*suji*). Twenty of the plates are fixed with star-shaped rivets known as *hoshi*, from which the name of this helmet-bowl type (*hoshi-bachi*) is derived. Each plate has ten rivets, with an additional one on the lower edge (*koshi*). At the front is a three-pronged *shinodare* similarly fixed with rivets. IH





**27.**

*Hoshi-kabuto* (riveted helmet) with fifty-two plates and red lacing

重要文化財
緋威五十二間四方白星兜

Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Iron, copper, leather, gold, silk, and brocade
H. of helmet bowl, 13.2 cm (5¼ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

The changes in the typical manner of warfare in Japan over the latter half of the Kamakura period—generally a shift from cavalry- to infantry-based combat—brought about significant improvements to the shape of armor and the method of wearing it. The comparatively heavy *yoroi* armor, for example, was replaced by the lighter *dō-maru* and *haramaki* types. Helmets, though still sturdy, were also designed to be lighter. This example, at once stylish and robust, comprises fifty-two thin, narrow iron plates joined together and fixed with small star-shaped rivets, with the joints edged in metal (*fukurin*). Four gilt-copper plates at the front, back, and sides of the helmet bowl carry three arrow shapes, or *shinodare*, at the front and four at the rear. The *shikoro*, which protects the back of the neck, is laced in red and composed of five rows that descend in the *kasa-gata* style, meaning it flares at a shallow angle with the bottom plate turned slightly down, resembling an umbrella or straw hat. The brim is covered in pale green brocade and has a three-section *kuwagata-dai*: a fitting that here holds two *kuwagata* (stylized horns) as well as the emblem of a *ken* (a double-edged, straight sword), at center. The *kuwagata-dai* itself is embellished with flowering chrysanthemums sculpted in relief. The helmet is thought to date from the Nanbokuchō period judging from the design of the chrysanthemums on the *kuwagata-dai*, the craftsmanship of the bowl, and the decorative effect of the brocade. It once belonged to Prince Ōoto-no-Miya Morinaga Shinō, who, as son of the Emperor Go-Daigo (r. 1319–39), was actively involved in the Kemmu Shinsei, the government formed by the emperor in 1334 in opposition to the military government at Kamakura.

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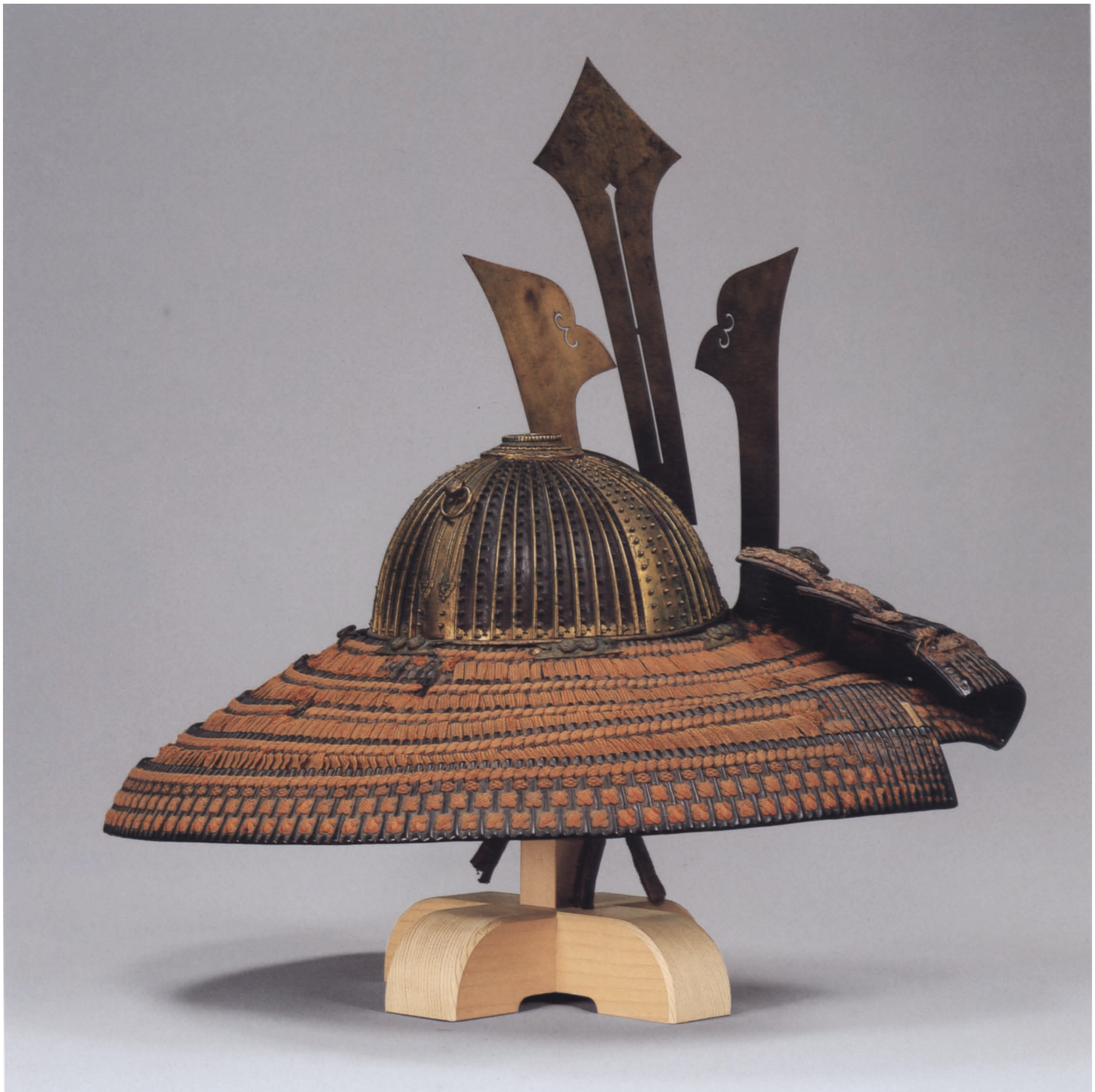

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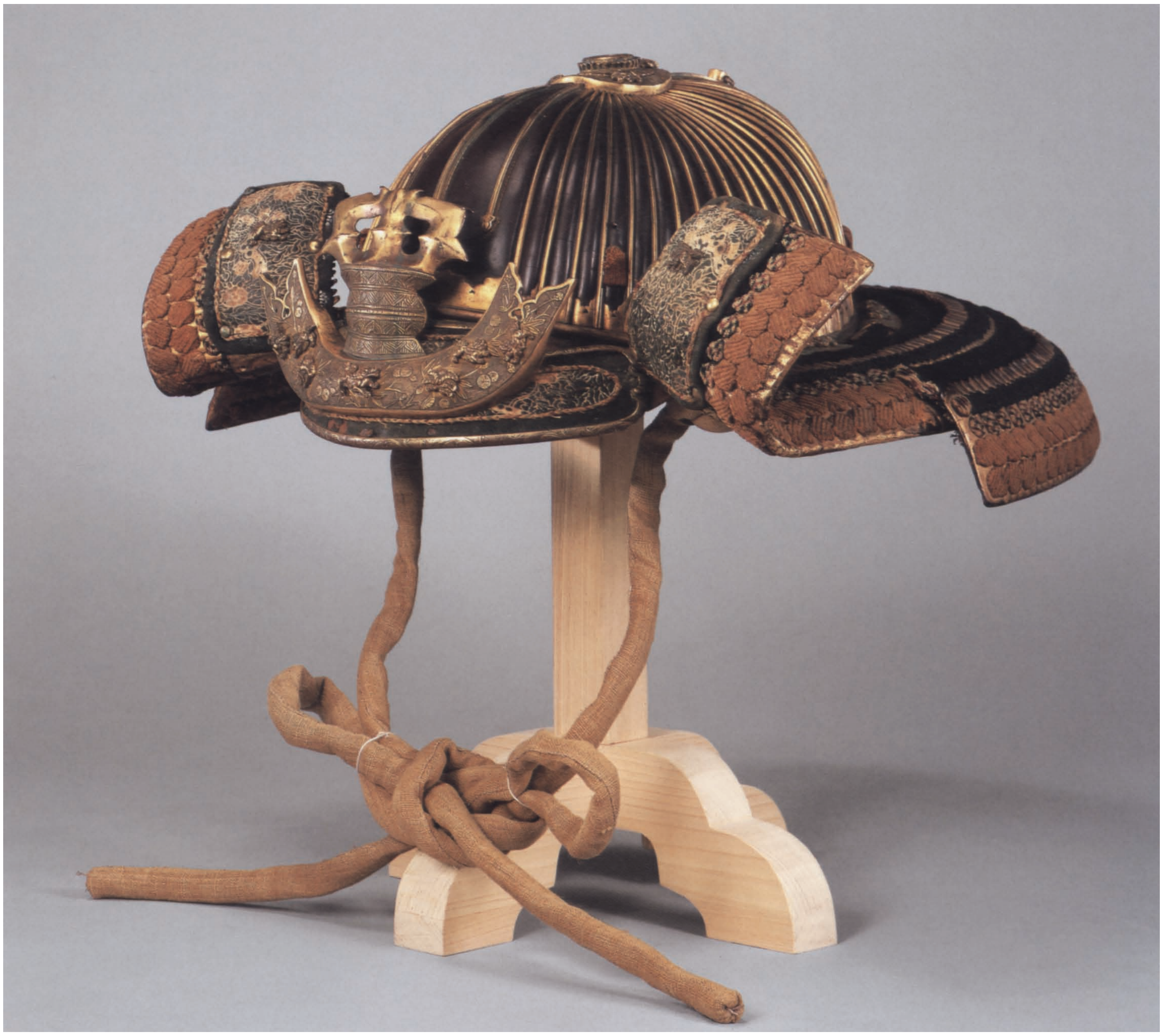

**28.**

## Black-lacquered *suji-kabuto* (ridged helmet) with forty-eight plates

黒漆四十八間覆輪筋兜

Muromachi period, 16th century
Iron, lacquer, copper, gold, and silk
H. of bowl, 14.3 cm (5⅝ in.)
Kyoto National Museum

This type of helmet, known as a *suji-kabuto* (ridged helmet), replaced the *hoshi-kabuto* (see, e.g., cat. nos. 26, 27) beginning about the fourteenth century. The bowl comprises forty-eight triangular iron plates riveted together into a hemispheric shape. The heads of the rivets are flattened, however, and the edges of the individual plates are thus pronounced, with each ridge given a decorative gilt-copper edging or rim (*fukurin*). The overall shape—in which the helmet bowl rises slightly in front of and behind the *tehen* (the crown or apex of the bowl)—is known as *akoda-nari* (*akoda* is a squashlike fruit), a style fashionable during the Muromachi period.

The *kuwagata-dai* (frontal bracket) is made of gilt copper and is decorated with chrysanthemums carved on a *nanako* (punched dot) ground; on top are decorative rivets with peonies and *shishi* (Chinese lions) chiseled in high relief (*kata-bori*). The *shishi*, a traditional motif, was a specialty of the Gotō family of sword fittings makers. It was frequently used on metal sword fittings but rarely on the metal components of an armor. Additional fittings decorated with *shishi* can be found on the three rows of the dark blue–laced *shikoro* (neck guard)—which is composed of gold-covered *sane* (scales)—and on the *fukigaeshi*, the portions of the guard that are turned back at front to the left and right.

IH

**29.**

## *Momonari-kabuto* (peach-shaped helmet) with water buffalo horns

重要文化財
黒漆塗桃形水牛脇立兜

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, lacquer, cord, thread, and gold
H. of front of bowl, 23 cm (9 in.); H. of *wakidate*, 62 cm (24⅜ in.); Diam. of *wakidate*, 8.9 cm (3½ in.)
Fukuoka City Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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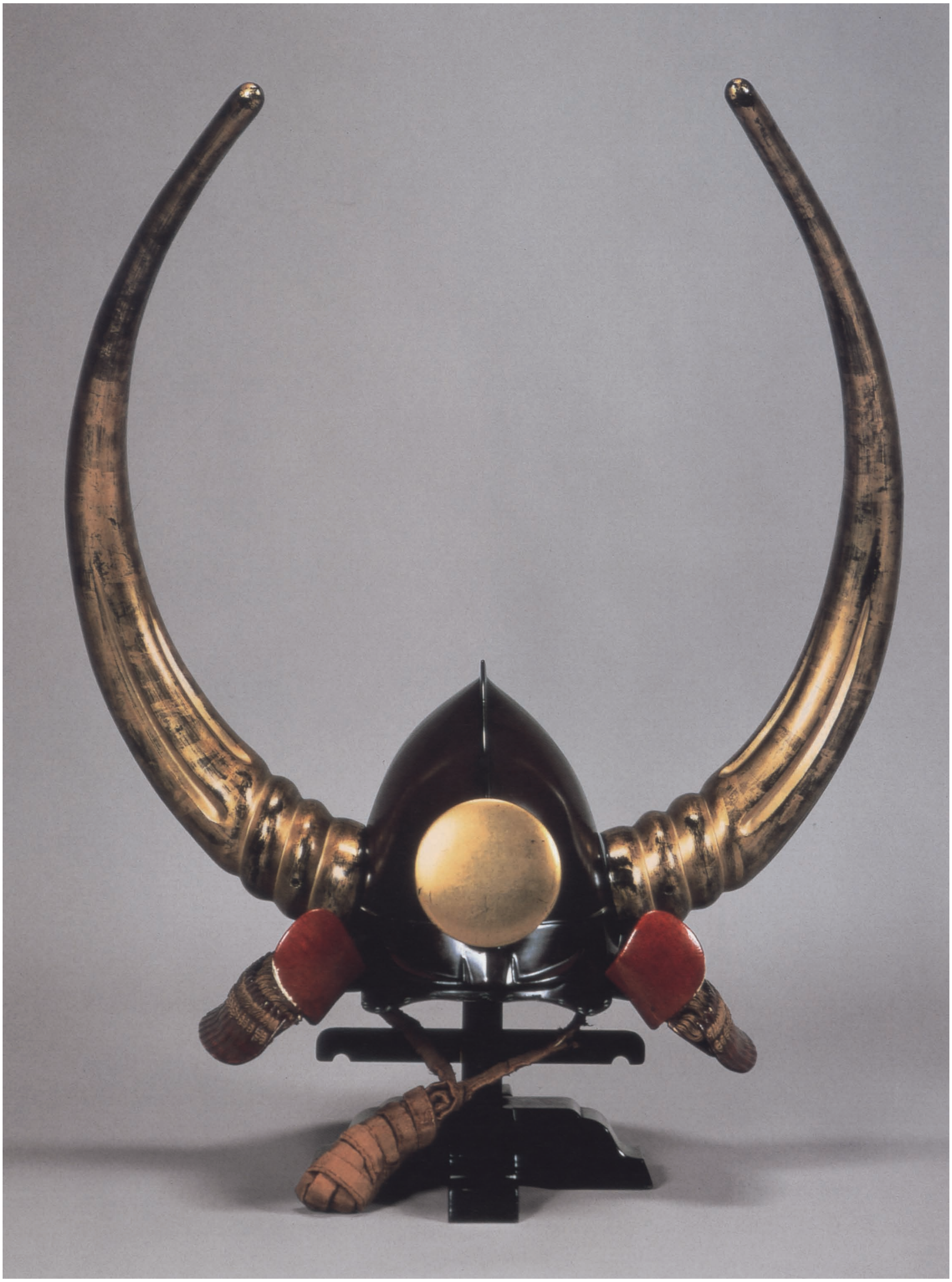
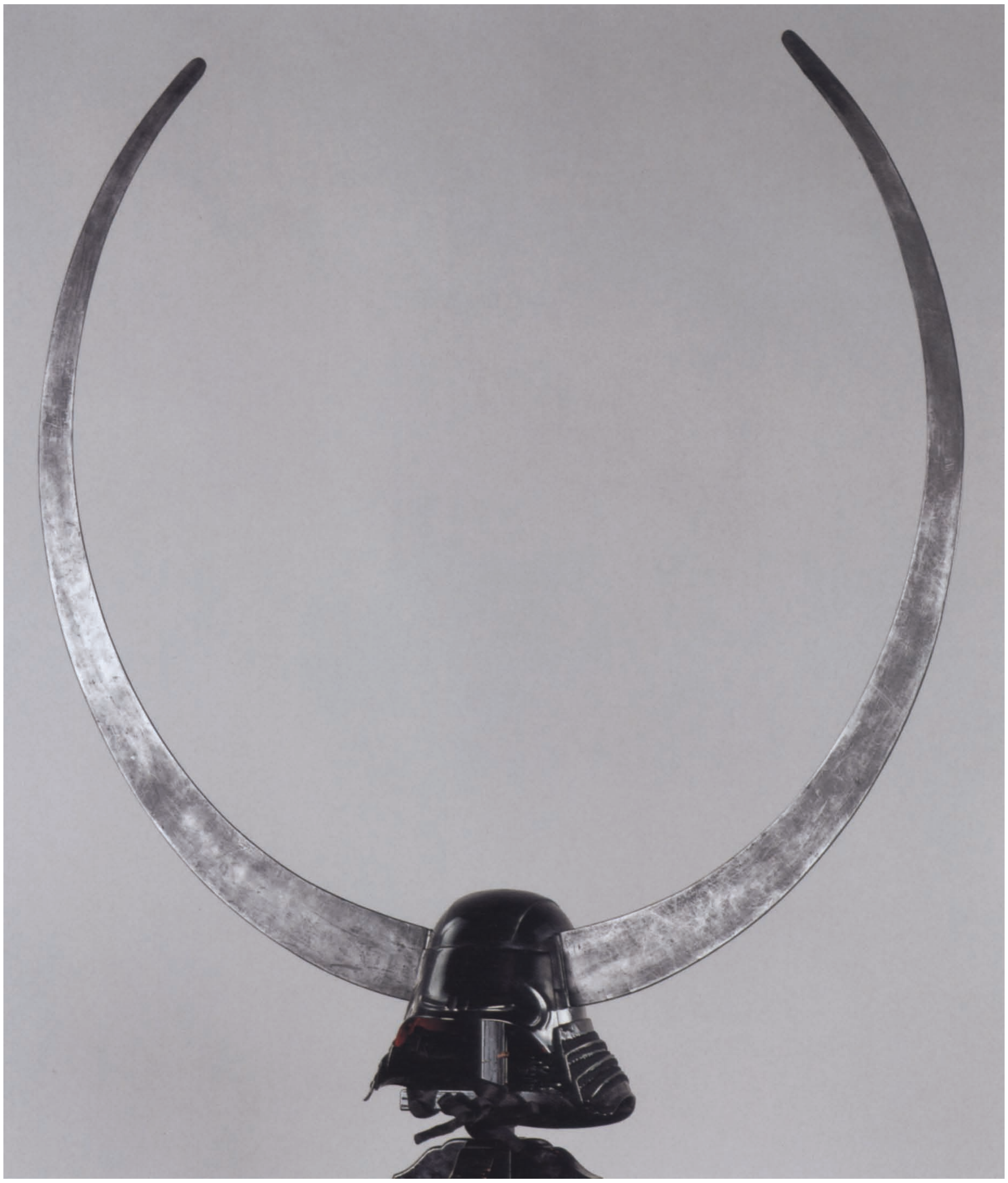
The bowl of this helmet was constructed by joining four iron plates, two on each side, into a "peach" shape. Helmets of this form (*momonari-kabuto*) were early prototypes of *kawari-kabuto*, the decorative helmets that were the height of fashion during the Momoyama period. Lacquered in black overall, the helmet has a brim with embossed eyebrows. On the front is a *maedate* (crest) of wood covered with gold foil in the shape of the sun, thought to represent the *mon* of the Kuroda family, known as *ishimochi*. Iron posts on the left and right of the bowl support the distinctive water buffalo horn *wakidate* (side crests), which are actually quite light. The wood horns, tipped with *kanshitsu* (dry-lacquered textile), are completely covered with gold leaf. The *shikoro* (neck guard) consists of three rows of *itazane* plates (wide bands of iron), with the *fukigaeshi* (turned-back portions) on the first row. The plates were first joined with brown lacing and then covered with leather before being lacquered.

This extravagant, highly individualized, and renowned helmet of the Momoyama period reflected the status of its owner: Kuroda Nagamasa (1568–1623), a samurai of the Sengoku-jidai (Age of Wars) who was first lord of the Fukuoka domain and a prominent military commander. Subsequently exchanged for the "Ichi-no-Tani Kabuto"—a famous helmet owned by another great commander of the time, Fukushima Masanori (1561–1624)—it was passed down in his family until it was returned to the Kuroda in the fifth month of the fifteenth year of the Tenpō era (1844). ST





## 30.

### *Zunari-kabuto* (head-shaped helmet) with *ō-nakaguri* side crests

### 大中刳兜

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, lacquer, silk, and silver
H. of bowl, 20.5 cm (8⅛ in.)
Fukuoka City Museum

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Five plates lacquered in black make up this helmet bowl of the *zunari* (head-shaped) type. Embossed eyebrows and moon-shaped wrinkles appear on the brim. The neck guard (*hineno-zunari shikoro*), which comprises four plates with no *fukigaeshi* (turned-back portion), is laced in the *kebiki* style, with fine, close parallel lacing. Attached to both sides of the bowl are extremely large *nakaguri wakidate*, or "cut-away" side crests, which are covered in silver leaf. The crests—so named because they form a large disk with the center "cut away"—gradually taper toward their tips.

By virtue of size alone this helmet ranks among the most dramatic of all the *kawari-kabuto* (exotic helmets) and doubtless would have made an overwhelming impression on the viewer. It is said to have been owned by Kuroda Kazunari (1571–1656), one of the Twenty-four Knights of Kuroda (see cat. no. 31), and is also said to have been worn at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600). According to lore, the *wakidate*, since they are so large, were mistaken for a *hata sashimono*—a flag inserted into the back of an armor—and thus became a target of cannon fire.

ST

Ogata Shinkō

## 31.

## The Twenty-four Knights of Kuroda

## 黒田家二十四将図

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Edo period, 19th century
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on paper
124.1 × 55.5 cm (48⅞ × 21⅞ in.)
Fukuoka City Museum

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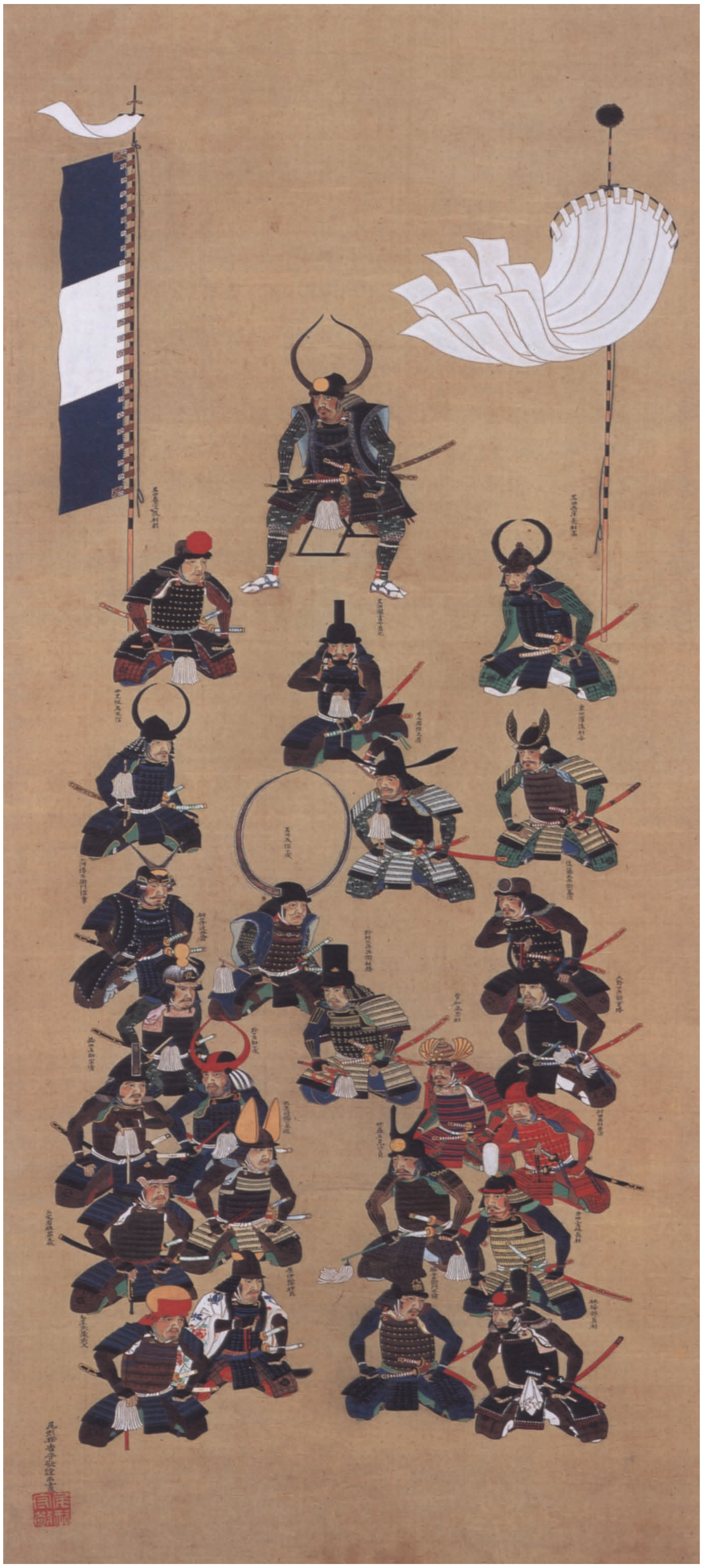
In this commemorative group portrait, the warrior and daimyo Kuroda Nagamasa (1568–1623), an important lieutenant of Tokugawa Ieyasu at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600), is depicted alongside his twenty-four close retainers, all of whom are clad in armor and helmets. Nagamasa is shown at top center, with twelve retainers seated to either side of him. The retainers, who supported the foundation of the Kuroda clan of Fukuoka province, include Mōri Tahei, famed for owning the great *yari* (spear) named "Nihongō," and Gotō Matabei, who died during the siege of Ōsaka Castle (1614–15).

The formula for this type of portrait was established from about the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century and was highly regarded beginning in the mid-Edo period. It is believed that the Kuroda family, no doubt aware of other group portraits such as the *Tokugawa Juroku Shozu* (Sixteen Commanders of the Tokugawa) and the *Takeda Nijūyon Shō Zu* (Twenty-four Commanders of the Takeda), saw the need for a similar record of their own, many copies of which were made in the late Edo period.

The painter, Ogata Shinkō, a retained artist of the Fukuoka *han* (domain), was the ninth generation of the Ogata family. In the tenth year of the Bunka era (1810), his grandfather, Ogata Tōkoku, had been commissioned by Narikiyi, the tenth-generation lord of the *han*, to produce the *Kuroda Nijūyon Ki Gachō* (Illustrated Book of the Twenty-four Horsemen of Kuroda), showing each warrior in fine detail. This painting is thought to have been patterned on that illustrated book. ST



## 32.

## *Kabuto* (helmet) in the shape of Mount Fuji, with silver leaf

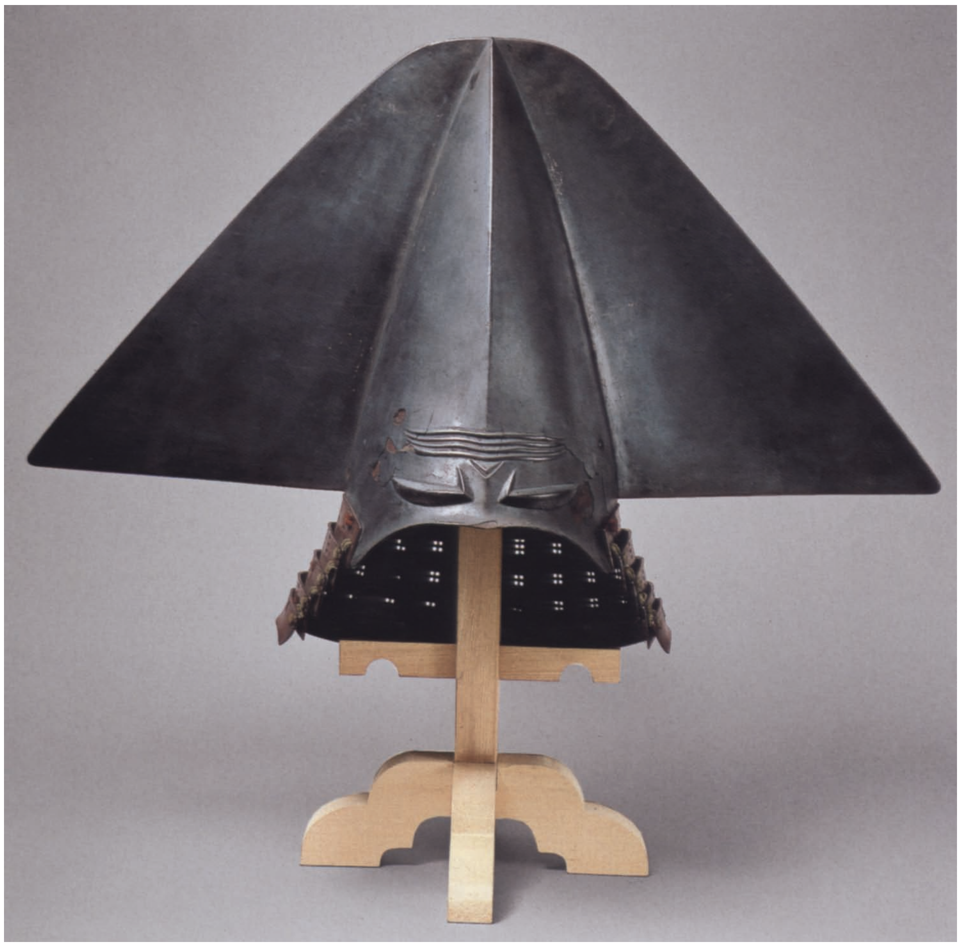
## 銀箔押富士山形兜

Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, lacquer, leather, silver leaf, cord, and animal hair
H. of outer bowl, 32.5 cm (12¾ in.); lateral Diam.
of outer bowl, 66.4 cm (26⅛ in.)
Yasukuni-jinja Shrine, Tokyo

The inner section of this helmet is a six-plate *shii-nari* (acorn-shaped) bowl, while the outer section is made of tanned leather in the shape of Mount Fuji. The exterior is lacquered black and embellished with applied silver leaf. The "summit" of the mountain curves gently to the left and right, with a slightly steeper slope at the base. A single vertical ridge is built up on the front. The brow of the helmet is embossed with four wrinkles. A circular hole with a radius of about 10 centimeters, pierced into the built-up part of the back of the helmet, has a bunch of silvery white hair inserted into it.

The helmet is said to have been owned by the renowned warrior Katō Yoshiaki (1563–1631), one of the Seven Spearmen of the Battle of Shizugatake (1583). A famous story relates that when a certain samurai went to pick up this helmet, which is large and appears to be heavy, he fell over backward in surprise, since it is, in fact, quite light.

ST



## 33.

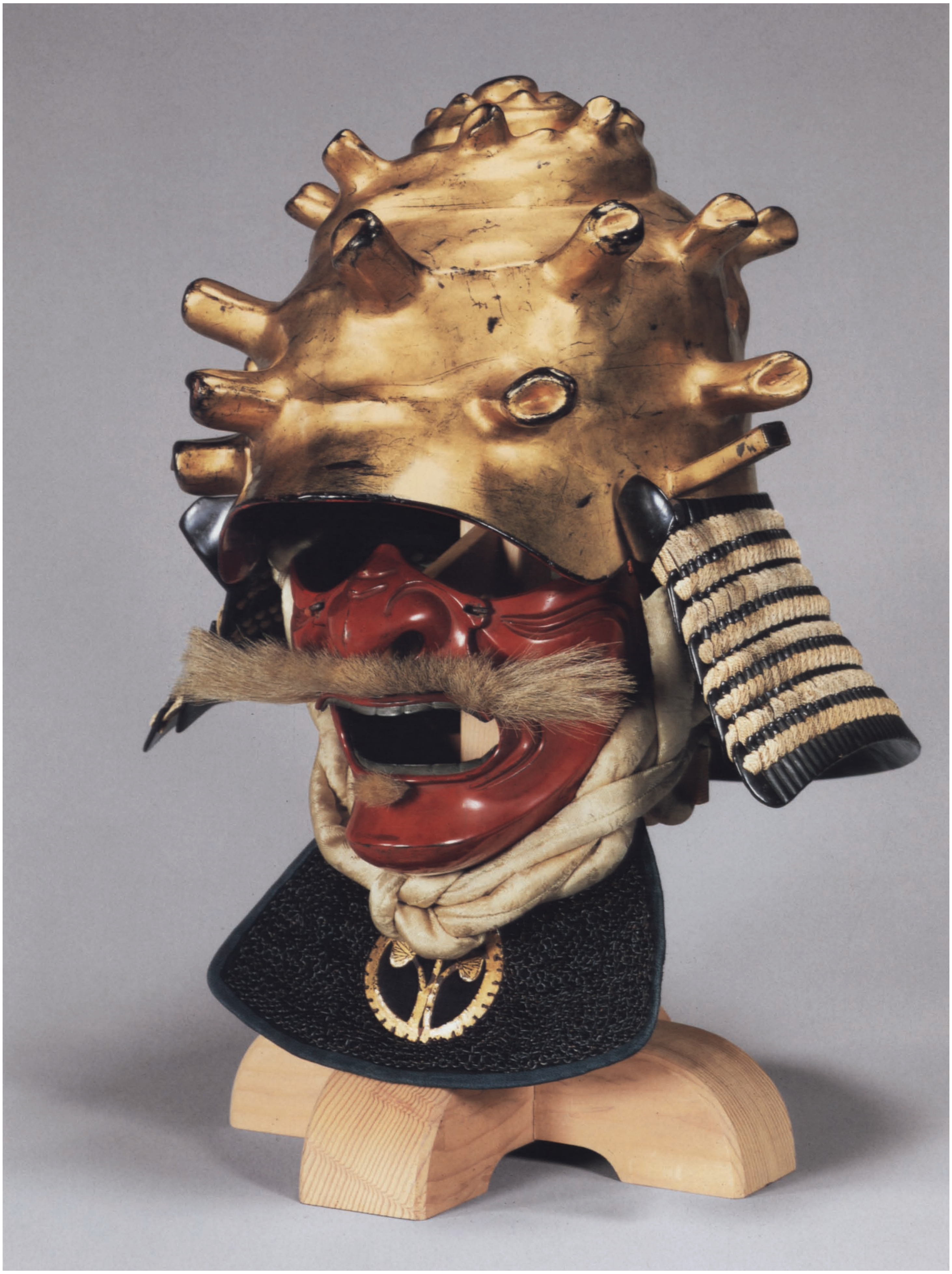
## *Kabuto* (helmet) in the shape of a turban shell, with gold leaf

## 金箔押栄螺形兜

Momoyama period, 17th century
Iron, gold leaf, lacquer, and silk
H. of bowl, 19.3 cm (7⅝ in.); H. of neck guard,
14.7 cm (5¾ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

This is one of numerous helmets made in the shape of the turban, a family of spiral-shelled marine snail whose hard, nacreous exteriors and occasionally sharp spines made them perfect models. The shape is formed using an application thought to be papier-mâché. The gold leaf covering the bowl, the white lacing of the *shikoro* (neck guard), and the vermilion lacquer of the *hō-ate* (half-mask) combine to create a gorgeous contrast of colors. Since there are *tsunomoto* brackets on both sides of the bowl, the helmet is believed to have once been fitted with large *wakidate* (side crests). The helmet accompanies a *nanban*-style *nimai-dō* ("foreign"-style two-piece cuirass) with a central ridge; on the back of the cuirass is inscribed in gold *kindei* (gold powder mixed into lacquer) the name "Honda Takumi No Suke," possibly the name of an armorer.

IH



## 34.

# Black-lacquered *kabuto* (helmet) in the shape of a *tōkan-nari* (Chinese crown)

黒漆唐冠形兜

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, lacquer, and papier-mâché
H. of outer bowl, 25.5 cm (10 in.);
frontal Diam. of bowl, 21.1 cm (8¼ in.)
Yasukuni-jinja Shrine, Tokyo

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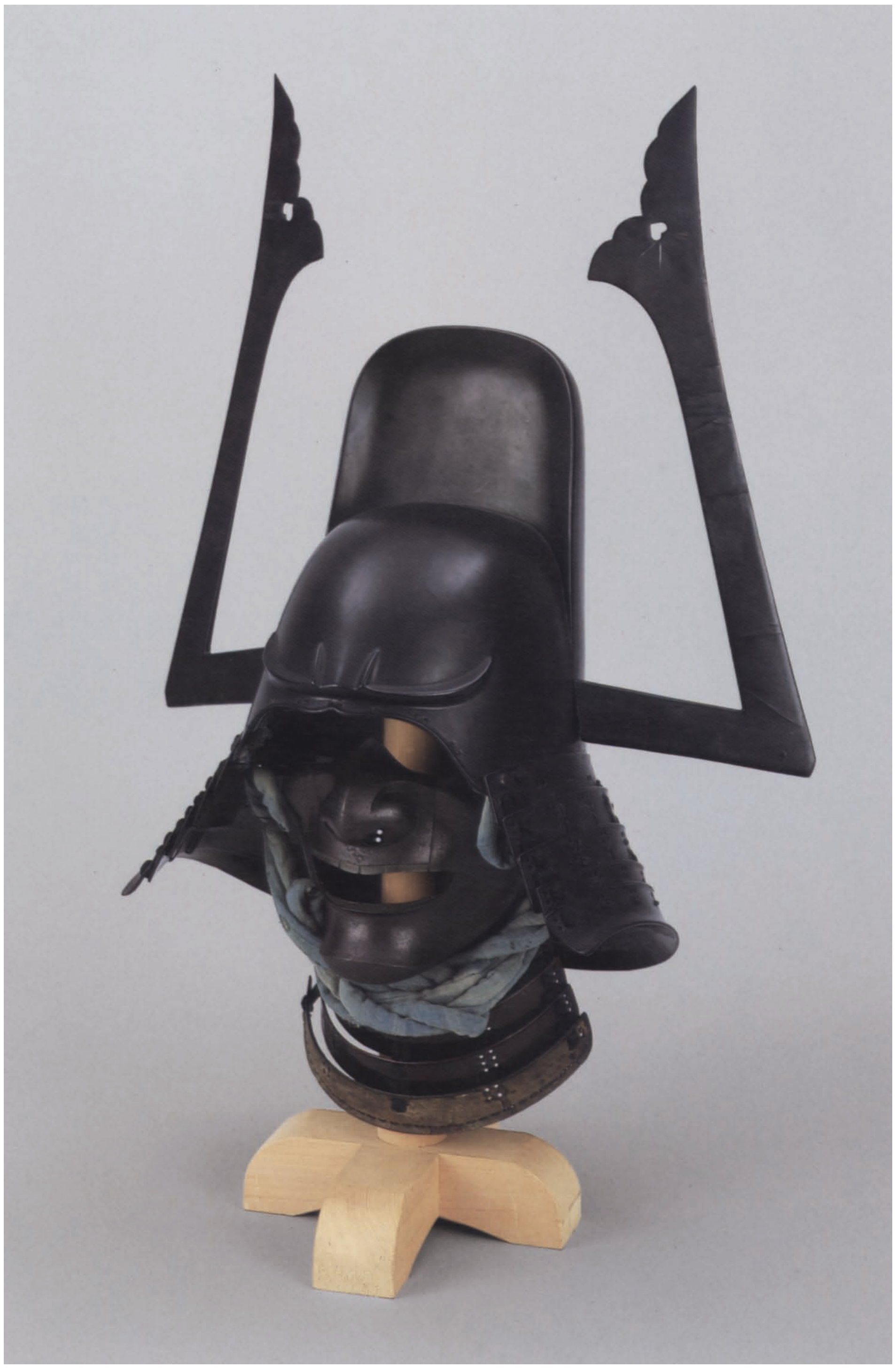
The Japanese term for this type of helmet is *tōkan-nari*, meaning a helmet in the style of a Tang-dynasty Chinese crown. In Japan, these crowns are called *kanmuri*. The outer bowl of the helmet is made of black-lacquered papier-mâché; the inner bowl is a *zunari* (head-shaped) *kabuto*. The helmet includes a *koji*, the part of the crown that contains the hair, and two *ei*, the components at either side whose form derives from the ends of the cords used to tie the cap in the original Chinese models. This version has a larger *koji* than found on the Japanese versions of such crowns, with the *ei* stretching out prominently at right and left: most *kawari-kabuto* (exotic helmets) of the *tōkan-nari* form are of this type. The *shikoro* (neck guard) is in the *hineno* style—in which the sides are shorter than the back—with five plates laced together. It is said that this piece is the famous helmet known as the "Tōkan," owned by Hineno Oribe no Kami Takayoshi (Takahiro, 1540–1600) of the Hineno family, hence the name of the type. ST



### 35.

## Silver- and gold-inlaid *nanban*-style *kabuto* (helmet)

## 金銀象嵌南蛮兜

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Momoyama period, 16th–17th century
Iron, gold, silver, leather, and lacquer
H. of bowl, 25.5 cm (10 in.)
Ōsaka Castle Museum

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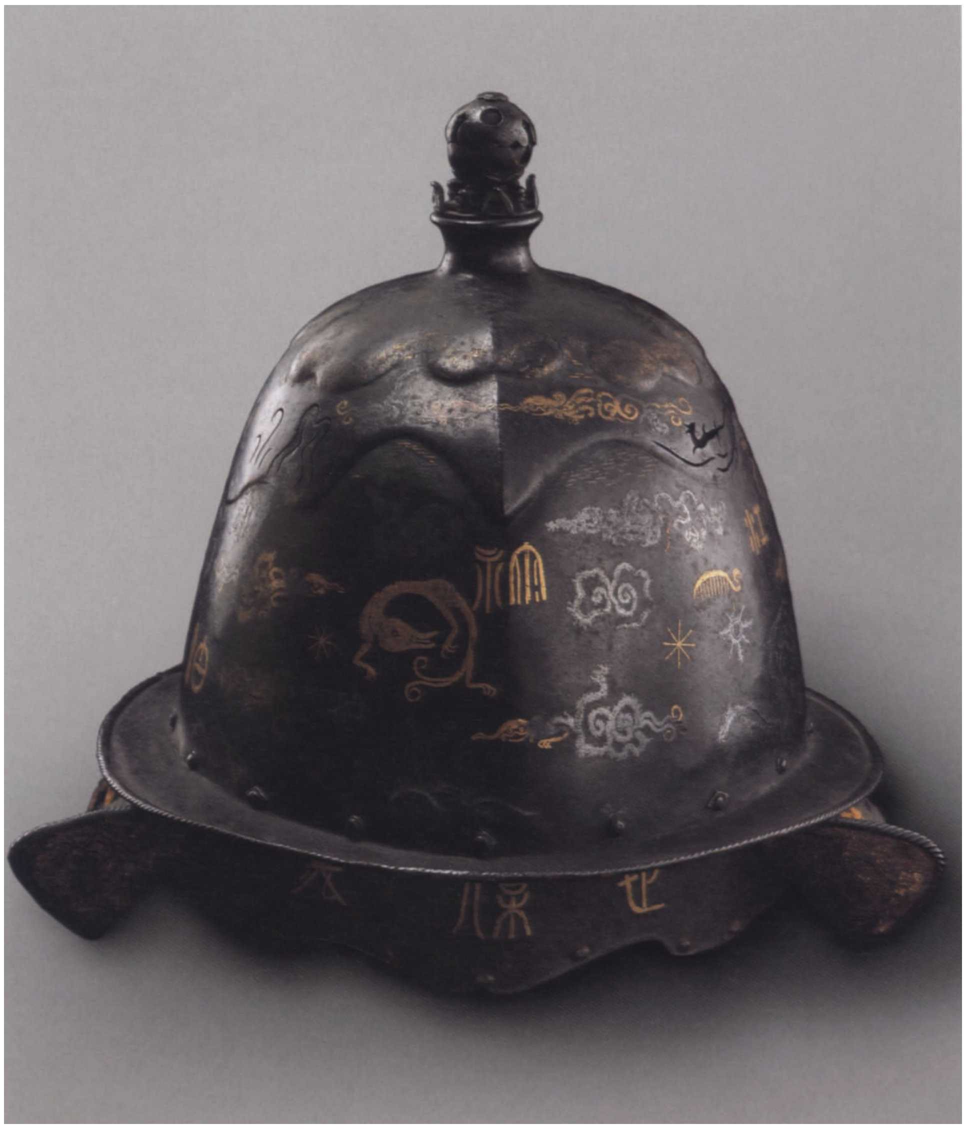


The bowl of the helmet is constructed of two pieces: the underlying helmet bowl surmounted by an embossed outer bowl. The outer bowl is inlaid in silver and gold with various dragons and characters written in the *tensho* script, a stylized form of writing. The dragons in the upper part of the bowl are pierced (*sukashi*). The *tehen*, or the apex of the crown, is in the form of a *hōju* (a Buddhist treasure jewel) with gold *nunome-zōgan*, analogous to damascening. The brim of the outer bowl is turned into a horizontal rim, with an applied rope-patterned iron *fukurin* along the edge. All that remains of the *shikoro* (neck guard) is the top plate (*hachi tsuke-ita*), which is wrapped with wrinkled black leather with brown lacing in the *sugake-odoshi* style (double parallel rows of laces spaced at intervals). The *fukigaeshi* (the portions of the neck guard that are turned back at front) are covered in gold Chinese leather and, like the brim, have rope-patterned *fukurin* (rims).

The helmet is said to have been given to Katō Yoshiaki (1563–1631) by Tokugawa Ieyasu and was known in the Katō family as the "*nanban* helmet," a reference to its foreign style: the horizontal brim and the gold- and silver-inlaid design were all considered exotic. IH

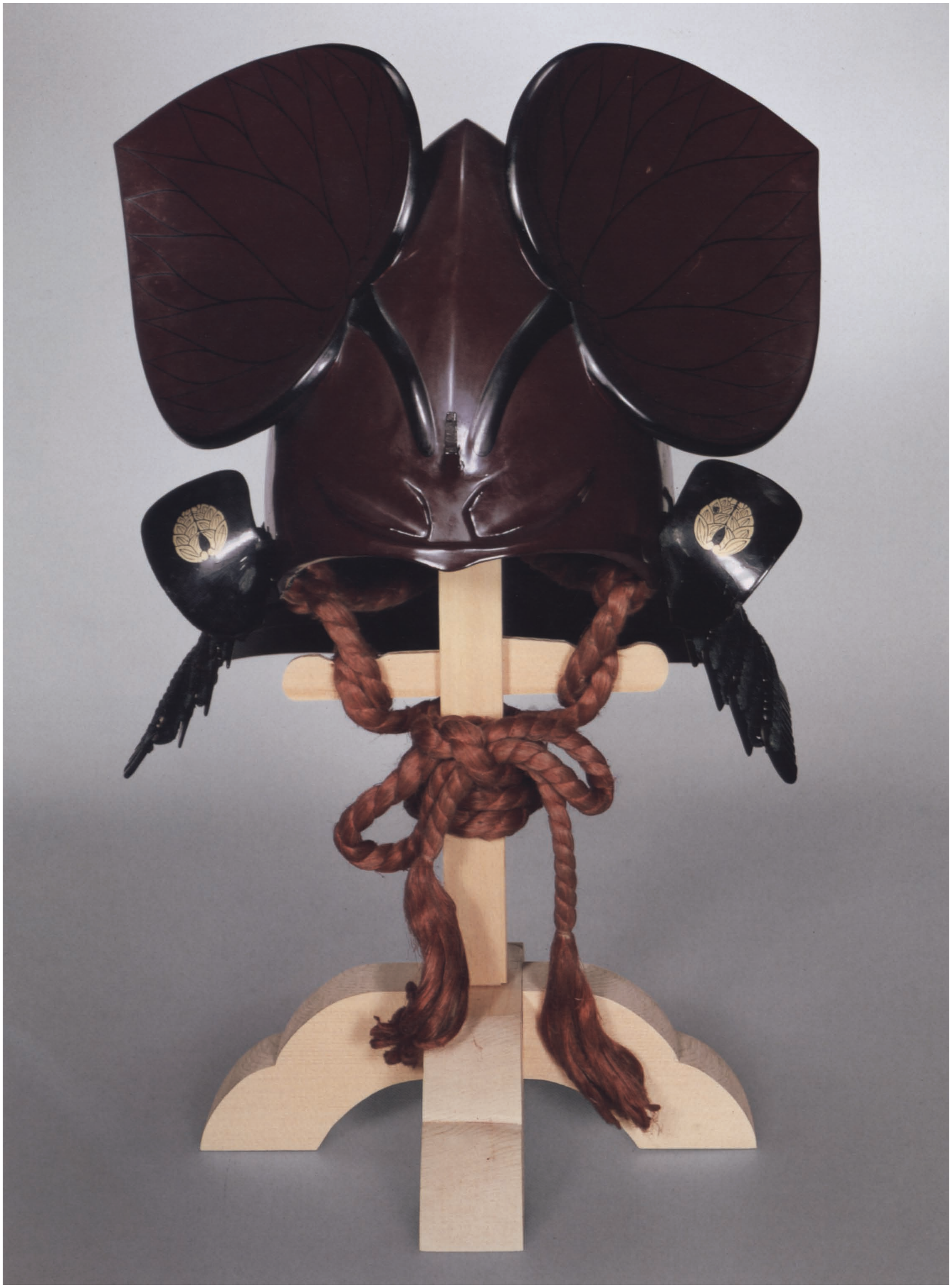
## 36.

## *Kabuto* (helmet) with hollyhock leaves

## 二葉葵張懸兜

Edo period, 17th–18th century
Iron, lacquer, silk, and *maki-e*
H. of bowl, 23 cm (9 in.)
National Museum of Japanese History,
Chiba Prefecture

The hollyhock (*aoi*) is prominently featured in festivals held at the Kamo Jinja, Kyōto, a shrine where it is regarded both as a sacred plant and, in a double-leafed version, as a holy *mon* (insignia). The hollyhock is also used as a family *mon* by devotees of the Kamo shrine religion, and it may be that this helmet belonged to such an individual. The two hollyhock leaves, opening to left and right, are placed on the front of the helmet. On both the helmet bowl and the leaves, a transparent lacquer was applied over a red lacquer base, known as *tame-nuri*; the stems and veins of the leaves are marked out in black lacquer. The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises five rows of black-lacquered *sane-ita* (scales) with dark blue lacing. The *fukigaeshi* (the turned-back portions of the neck guard) bear a *mon* of *daki myōga* (opposed ginger leaves) in gold *maki-e*. IH



## 37.

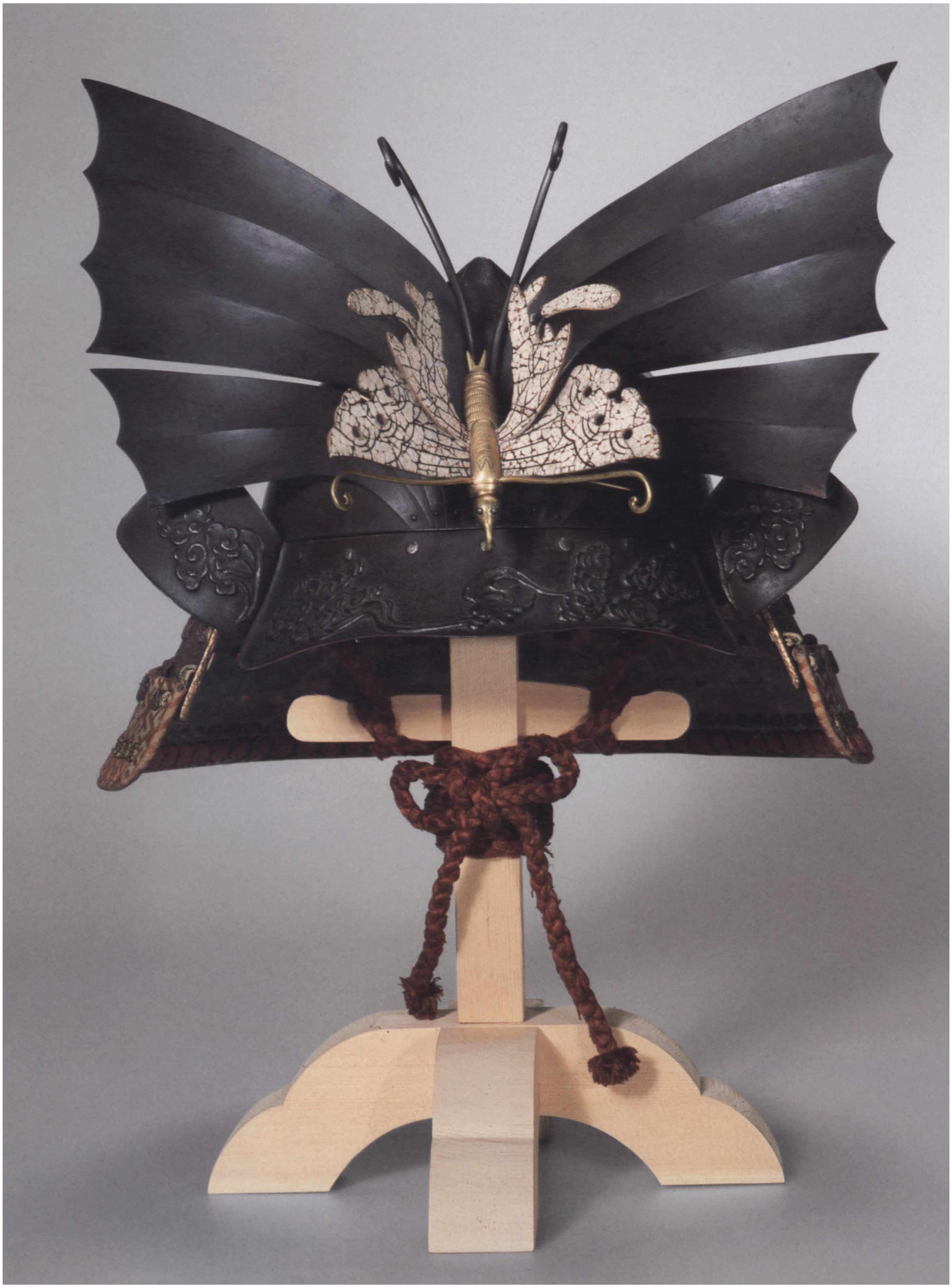
## *Momonari-kabuto* (peach-shaped helmet) with butterfly crest

## 蝶前立付桃形兜

Edo period, 18th century
Iron, wood, gold, leather, lacquer, and silk
H. of bowl, 26.5 cm (10⅜ in.)
National Museum of Japanese History,
Chiba Prefecture

In combination with birds, flowers, and grasses, the graceful shape of the butterfly has appeared as an auspicious motif on Japanese works of art—including a comparatively large number of helmets—since the Nara period. The pair of butterfly wings adorning the front of this *momonari* (peach-shaped) helmet bowl are made of six finely forged russet-iron plates; before them is placed a brass *maedate* (forecrest) in the form of a swallowtail butterfly. The brim and the *fukigaeshi*—the portions of the *shikoro*, or neck guard, that are turned back—bear auspicious cloud motifs. The *shikoro* comprises three rows, all laced in purple; the top two are decorated with *tataki-nuri* (roughened-texture) gold lacquer, and the lower one (the *suso-ita*, or "skirt plate") is covered by a textile with a linked swastika design, an ancient auspicious symbol. The signature of the maker, Mitsunaga, is inscribed on the back.

IH



**38.**

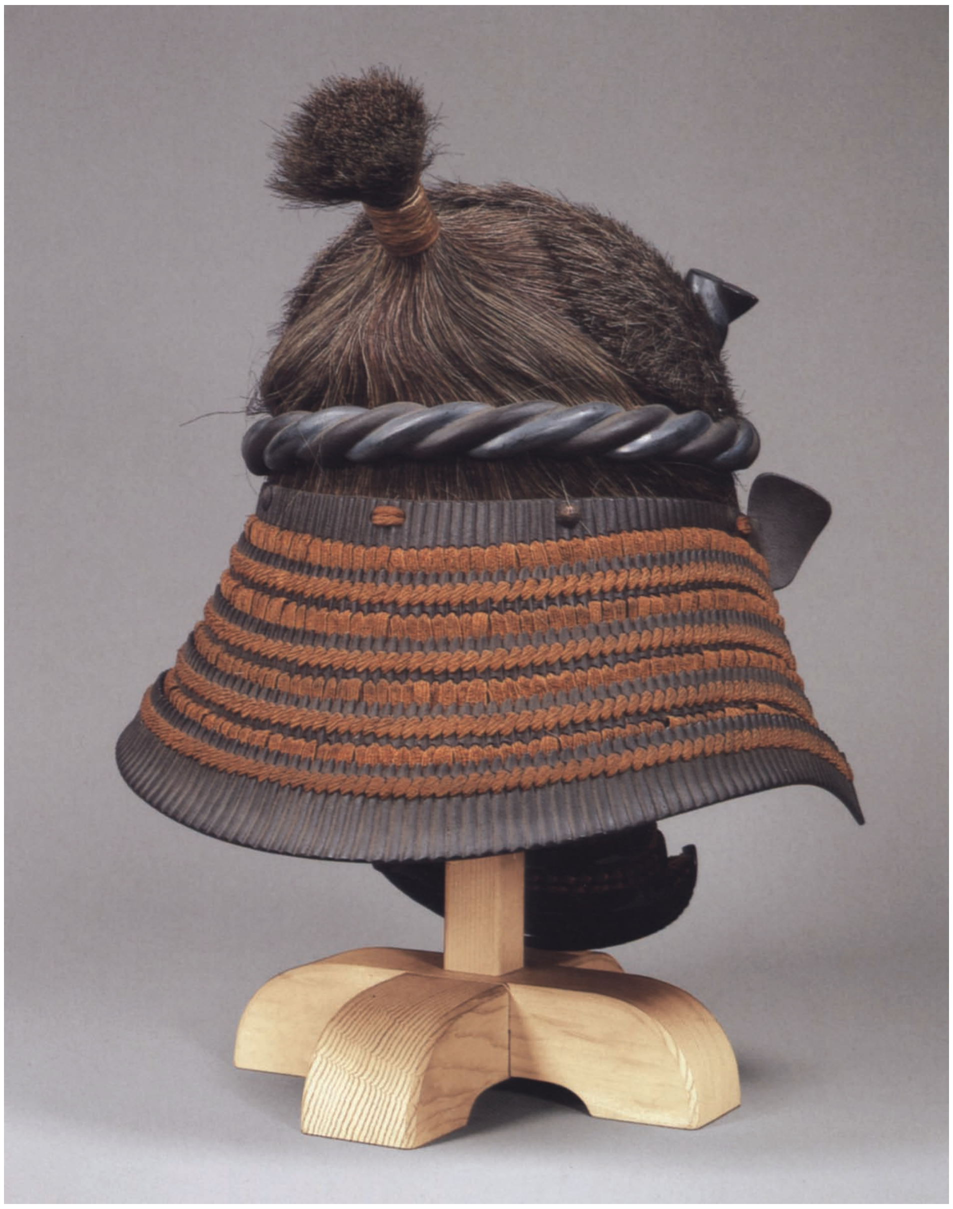
## *Kabuto* (helmet) with brown lacing and *yarōto*-style hair

茶糸威野郎頭形兜

Edo period, 17th century
H. of bowl, 15.6 cm (6⅛ in.); L. of neck guard, 16.1 cm (6⅜ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

This helmet accompanies a cuirass that represents the nude body of a *Ni-ō*, or Buddhist guardian deity, and aims at a similarly realistic effect. The hair implanted into the bowl, which is gray with some white, is tied at the back in the so-called *yarōto* style, worn by some samurai. Around the lower part of the helmet is a headband (*hachi-maki*) that is braided and tied at the front and embellished in black lacquer and silver leaf. The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises five rows of lacquered iron *itazane* with brown lacing. The inscription in vermilion lacquer under the first row refers to the Iwai, who were armorers active in both Nara and Edo.

IH



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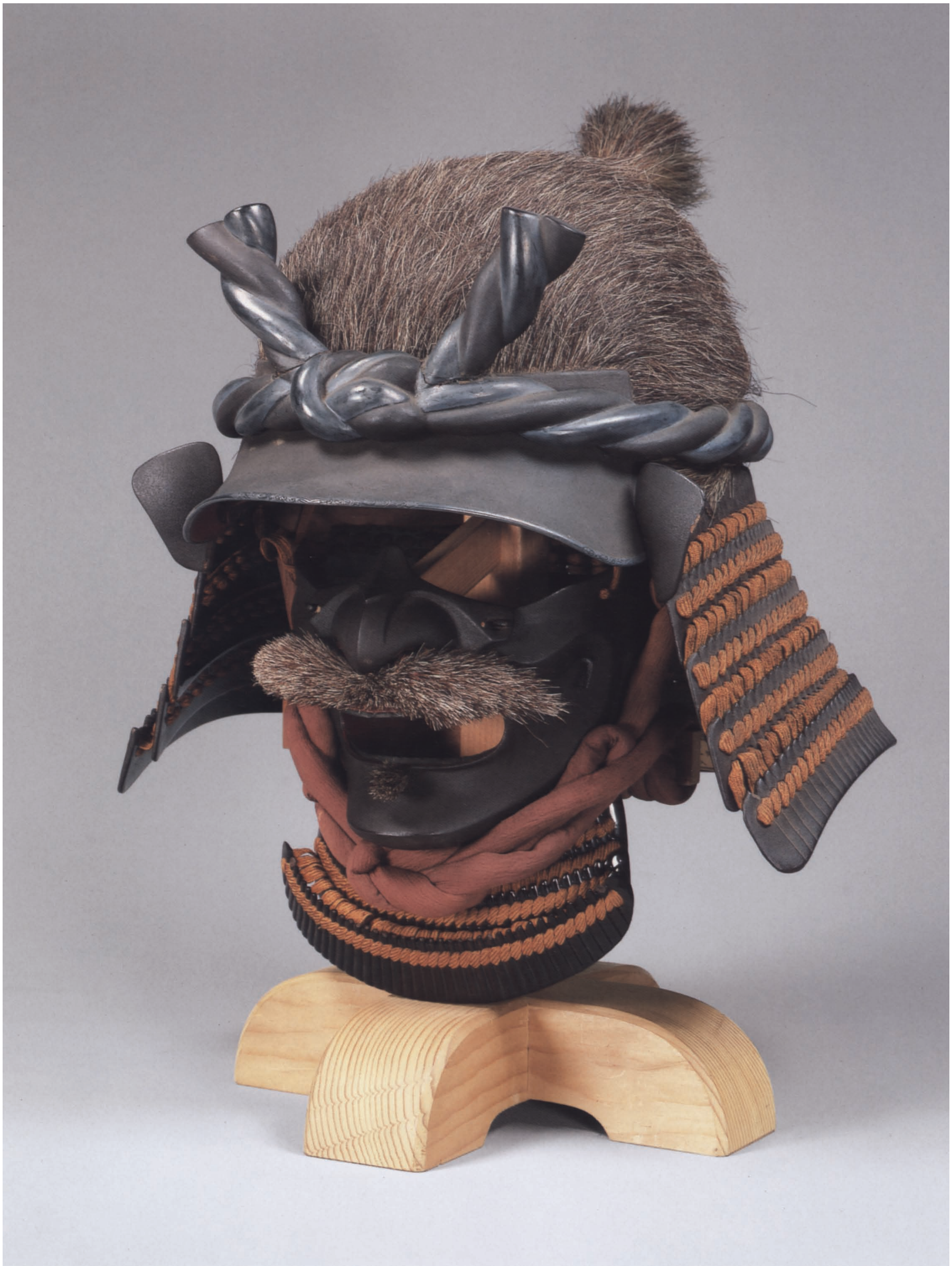


## 39.

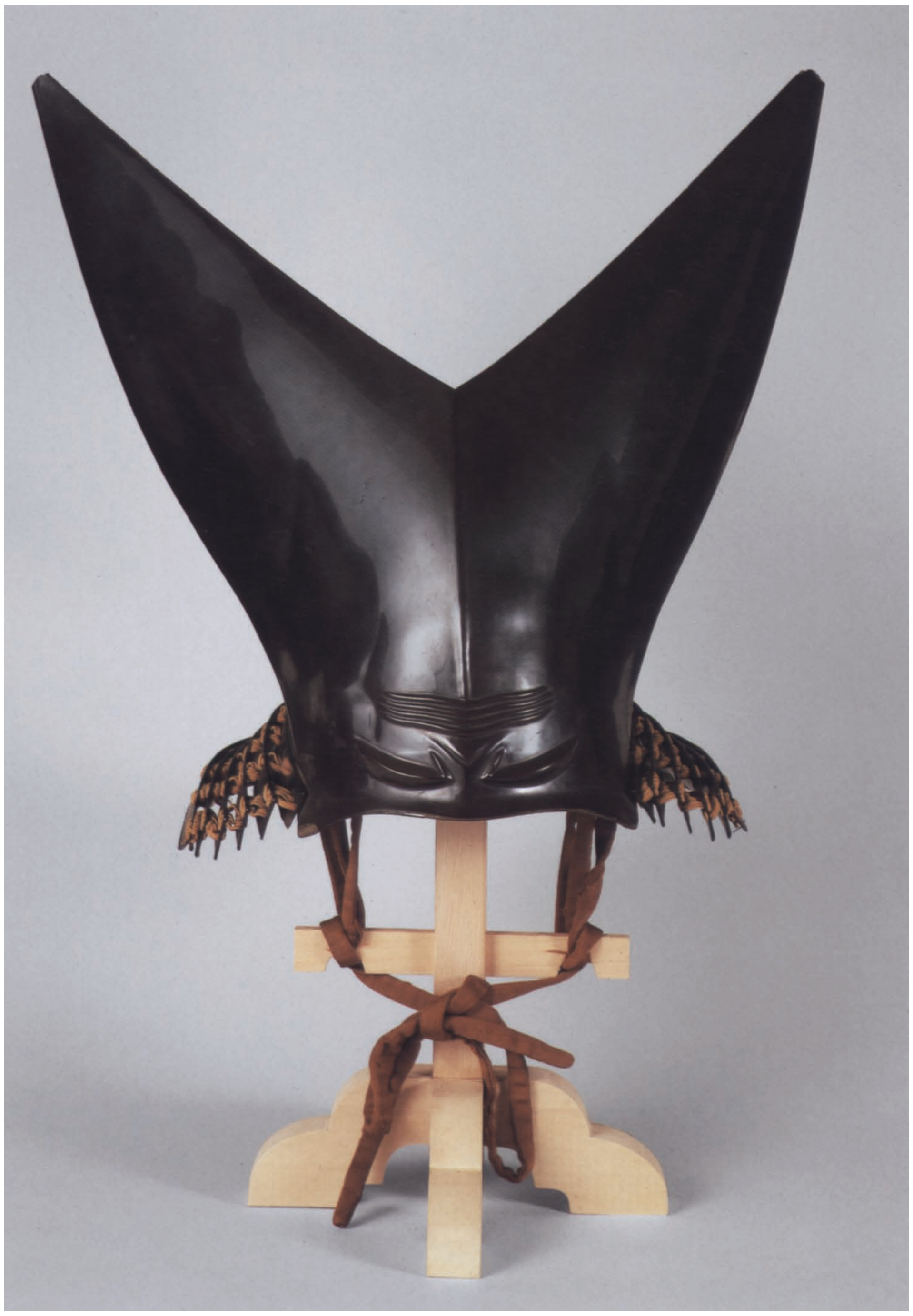
## *Eboshi*-shaped *kabuto* (helmet) with a *maedate* (forecrest) in the form of a mantis

## 蟷螂前立付烏帽子形兜

Edo period, 17th century
Iron, lacquer, cord, silk, wood, gold, and papier-mâché
H. of bowl, 20.3 cm (8 in.)
Private collection

This helmet accompanies a gold-covered, pale green–laced *nimai-dō* (two-piece cuirass) of a *gusoku*-type armor. A rather large *eboshi* shape (a type of cloth headgear; see cat. no. 45) is built up on the iron helmet bowl in papier-mâché and covered with gold *ikakeji tataki-nuri*: a technique in which a surface is roughened, lacquered, and sprinkled with gold powder, also seen in the *Ni-ō dō gusoku* armor (cat. no. 21). The dramatic *maedate* (forecrest) is in the shape of the head and body of a mantis; this is made of wood, while the four projecting wings are made of papier-mâché covered in gold foil. The bold expression of the mantis indicates that it is about to confront an enemy, a realistic flourish that no doubt would have been a center of attention on the battlefield.

*Maedate* in the form of a mantis are extremely rare. The helmet, whose pale green lacing reflected in gold adds a refreshing touch, was passed down along with the armor in the Maeda family, the daimyo of Kaga province (in present-day Ishikawa Prefecture). OM



**41.**

### Black-lacquered *kabuto* (helmet) with the arm of a guardian deity wielding a *vajra*

### 黒漆執金剛杵兜鉢

Edo period, 17th century
Iron, lacquer, wood, and papier-mâché
H. of outer bowl, 43.5 cm (17⅛ in.); frontal Diam., 25 cm (9⅞ in.)
Yasukuni-jinja Shrine, Tokyo

This powerful helmet represents the arm of *Kongō Rikishi*, a Buddhist guardian deity, who is grasping a *kongōsho*, or a *vajra* with between one and nine prongs; the five-pronged *vajra* seen here is called the *gokosho*, a ritual instrument of Mikkyō, or esoteric Buddhism. The *vajra* itself is made of wood covered in gold leaf and is considered to have been added at a later date. The inner part of the helmet is a six-plate *shii-nari* (acorn-shaped) bowl; the outer part is built-up in black-lacquered papier-mâché and has nine ridges representing tensed sinews. The brow is embossed with eyebrows and wrinkles.

The design of this otherworldy piece stands out even among the many surprising forms often taken by *kawari-kabuto* (exotic helmets). With its powerful arm, large hand, and grip brimming with strength, the helmet seems to have been designed specifically to inspire fortitude in samurai living in a time of war.

ST

**40.**

### Black-lacquered swallowtail *kabuto* (helmet)

### 黒漆塗燕尾形兜

Edo period, 17th century
Iron, lacquer, papier-mâché, and cord
H. of outer bowl, 38.8 cm (15¼ in.); lateral Diam. of outer bowl, 51.2 cm (20⅛ in.)
Yasukuni-jinja Shrine, Tokyo

The inner section of the helmet is a six-plate iron *shii-nari* (acorn-shaped) bowl; the outer portion is a representation of a swallow's tail, lacquered in black. A bunch of silvery white hair is fixed at the back and tied with silvered wire using the same method of construction as that found on the silver-leaf Mount Fuji helmet (cat. no. 32). The ground at the front is built up to form eyebrow shapes and four wrinkles. The *hineno*-type *shikoro* (see cat. no. 34) comprises six black-lacquered iron plates attached with *sugake*-style lacing.

ST

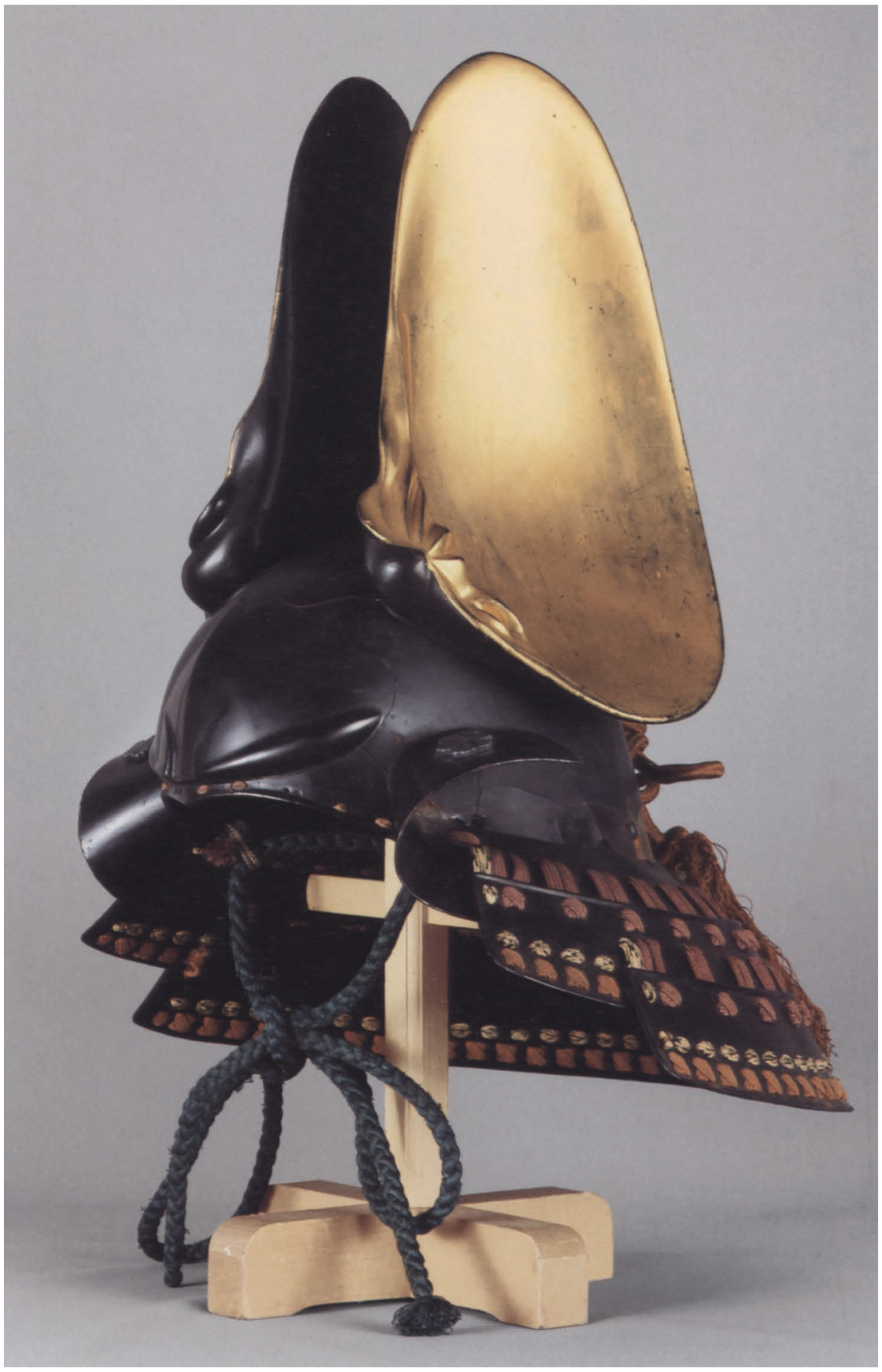
### 42.

## *Kabuto* (helmet) in the shape of open clamshells, with purple lacing

紫糸威割蛤形兜

Edo period, 17th–18th century
Iron, lacquer, silver, gold, silk, and wood
H. of bowl, 33.6 cm (13¼ in.)
Iwakuni Art Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture

On the sides of the black-lacquered helmet bowl are *wakidate* (side crests) modeled to resemble two large open clamshells. The "shell" interiors are covered in gold leaf and face outward, creating a striking effect against the black-lacquered base. The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises three rows of *itazane* (solid plates representing overlapping scales) laced with purple in the *sugake* style, in which double parallel rows of laces are spaced at intervals. The first row extends to form the *fukigaeshi*—the parts of the guard that are turned back at front—which bear silver paulownia *mon* (insignia). IH



## 43.

### *Kabuto* (helmet) in the form of a square cloth cap, with gold leaf

### 金箔押角頭巾形兜

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Edo period, 17th–18th century
Iron, gold, silk, and lacquer
H. of bowl, 22 cm (8⅝ in.)
Iwakuni Art Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture

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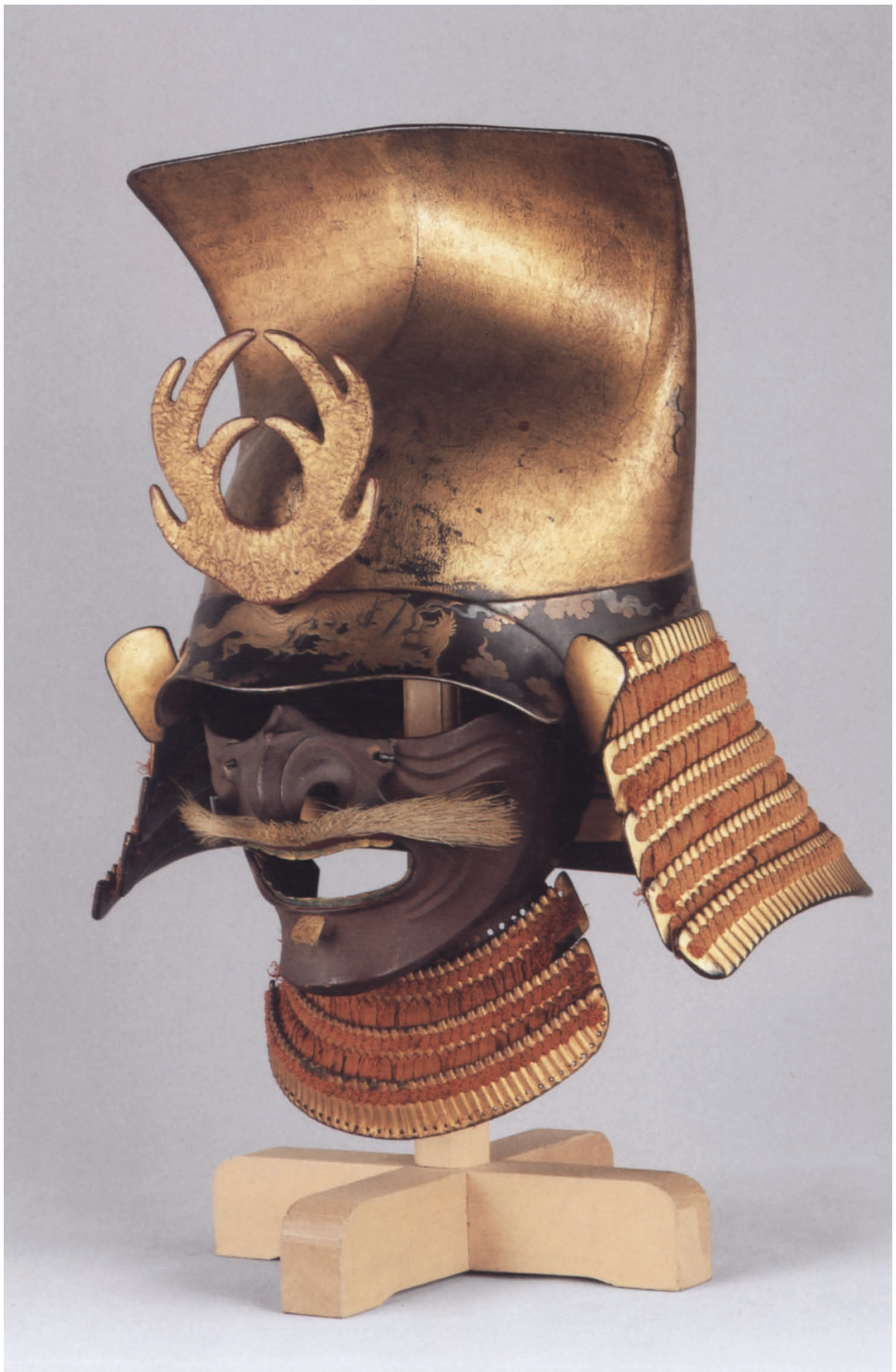
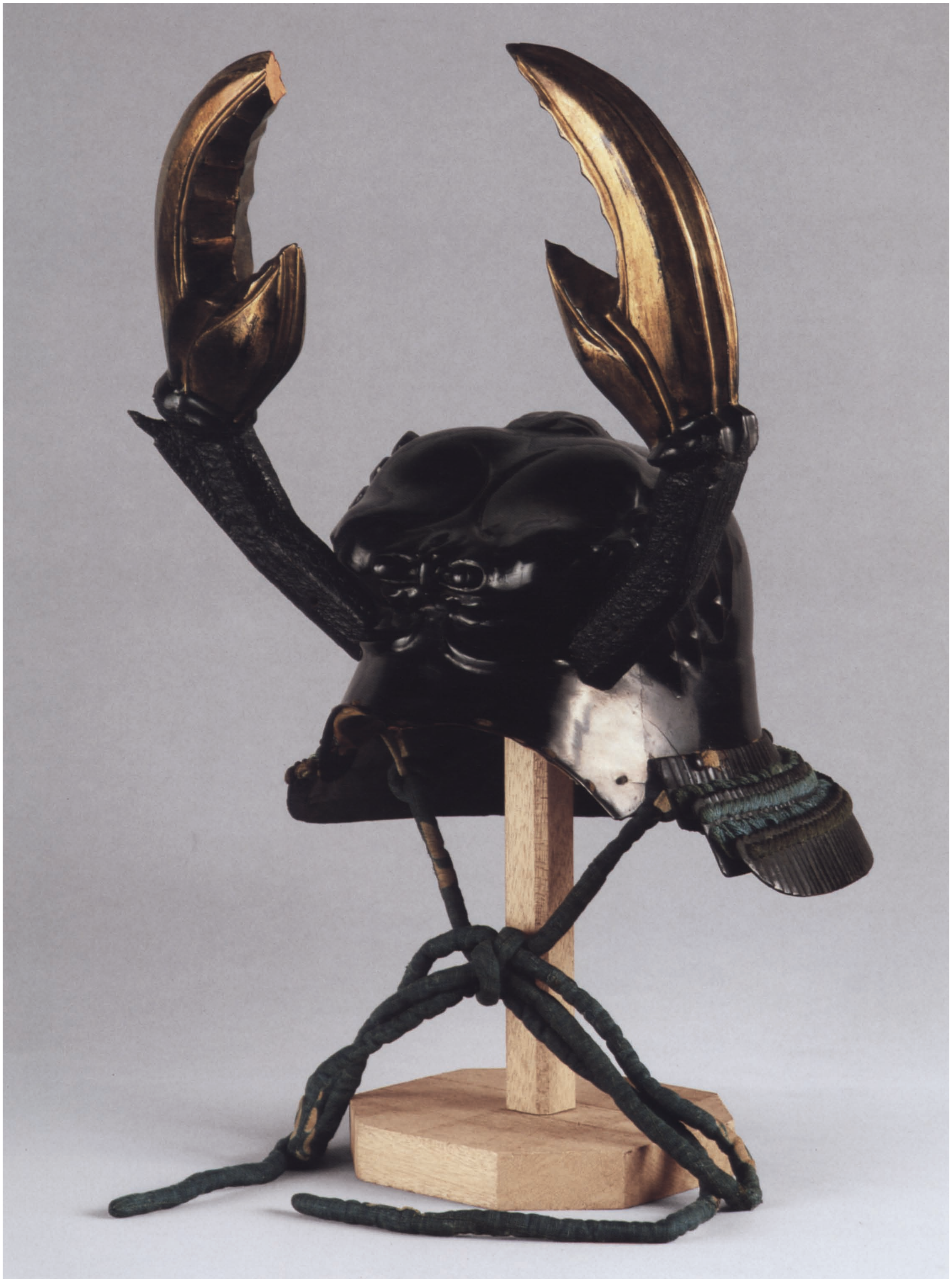


The *kakuzukin*, a type of headgear worn during the Edo period, was formed from a rectangular piece of cloth that was folded in half and sewn together along the sides. The bowl of this helmet, including the horizontal top, is shaped like such a cap. The brim and lower portion of the bowl are decorated with dragons and auspicious emblems depicted in *maki-e* on a black-lacquered ground. The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises five rows of *kittsukezane* (plates made to resemble rows of linked scales) covered in gold leaf with red lacing, a dazzling combination. *Kakuzukin*-type helmets are known to have been a particular favorite of the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada (r. 1605–23), and of Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563–1646), lord of Kumamoto domain.

IH



## 44.

### *Kabuto* (helmet) in the shape of a crab, with pale blue lacing

### 浅葱糸威蟹形兜

Edo period, 17th–18th century
Iron, wood, gold, silk, and papier-mâché
H. of bowl, 31.8 cm (12½ in.)
Iwakuni Art Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture

The black-lacquered *zunari* (head-shaped) helmet bowl is shaped like the shell and legs of a crab. Two large wooden claws, raised in a threatening gesture, project out as *maedate* (forecrests) at the sides of the brim. The claws are covered in gold leaf and have skillfully worked sawtooth edges, joints, and pointed spines. The black-lacquered, three-row *shikoro* (neck guard) has pale blue lacing.

IH

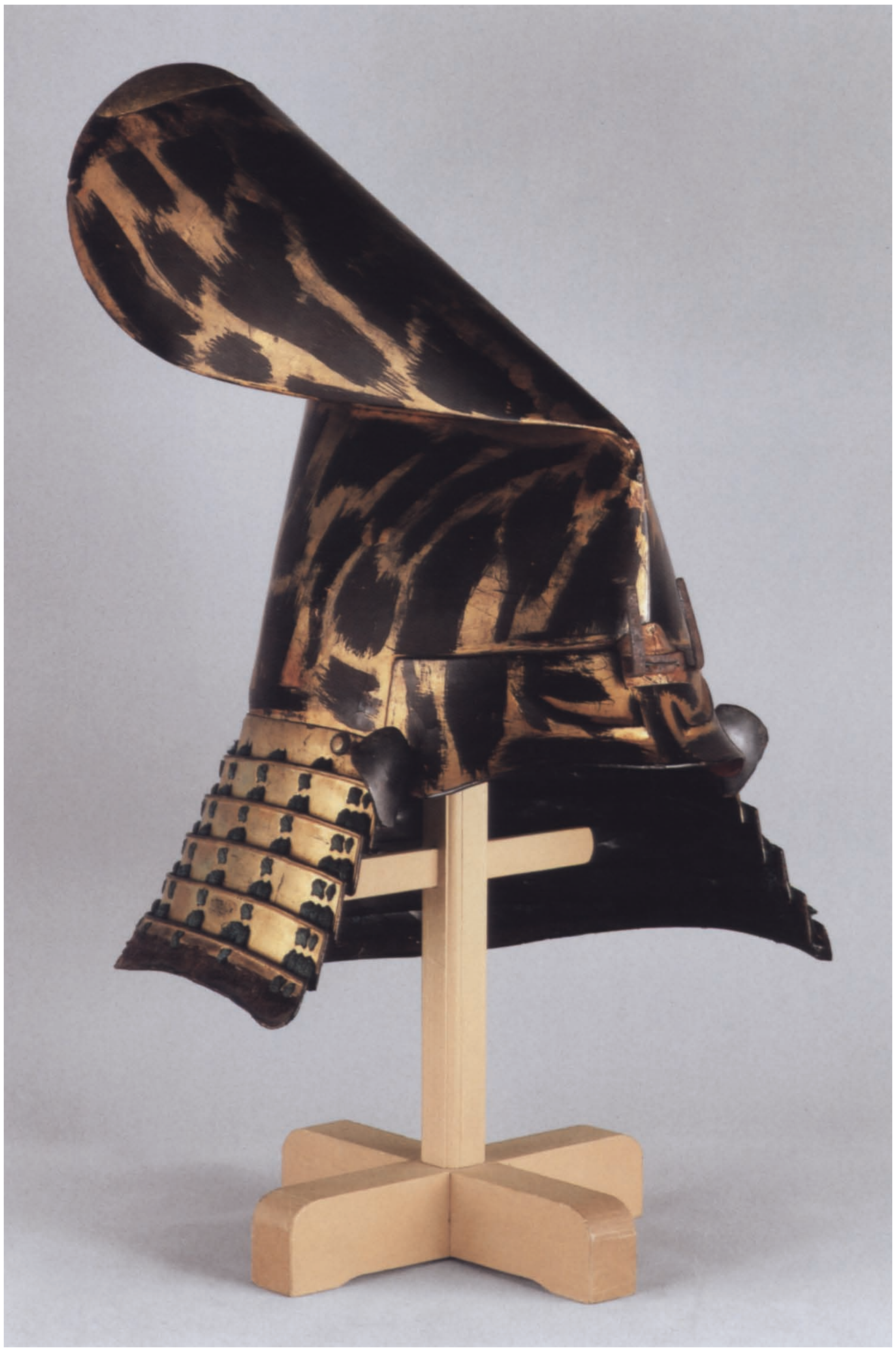
## 45.

### *Kabuto* (helmet) in the form of a wind-swept *eboshi* cap, with pale blue lacing

### 浅葱糸威風折烏帽子形兜

Edo period, 17th–18th century
Iron, gold, copper, and silk
H. of bowl, 33 cm (13 in.)
Iwakuni Art Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture

Until about the middle of the fifteenth century, the *eboshi*—a tall cloth cap with a slightly turned-back, rounded top—was an indispensable piece of everyday headwear for adult men in Japan. It was called an *eboshi* ("crow cap") since it was made of either paper or textile and was lacquered black, suggesting the coloring of a crow. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the *eboshi* came to be more stiffly constructed; at the same time, the custom arose of shaving the front part of the head, in a style known as *sakayaki*, making the *eboshi* more difficult to wear. As a result, it fell out of general use and was worn thereafter only on ceremonial occasions.



Many helmets in the shape of an *eboshi* survive because the type was a favorite of military commanders during the Sengoku-jidai (Age of Wars), including Maeda Toshiie (ca. 1538–1599) and Katō Kiyomasa (1562–1611). They were made larger than real *eboshi*, and many were relatively flamboyant—for example, covered in gold or silver leaf. The *kazaori-eboshi* ("wind-folded" *eboshi*) is so called because the *eboshi*, when worn outdoors, was susceptible to being bent by the wind, thus spoiling its appearance; consequently, the top was sometimes deliberately folded over and lightly lacquered. This helmet is in the form of such an *eboshi*, here folded over at the top to the right. It is lacquered black, dappled with gold leaf, and has a *tsunomoto* (bracket for a *maedate*, or forecrest) at the front. The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises six rows of *itazane* (single wide sheets of iron) and is laced in pale blue in the *sugake* style, in which double parallel rows are spaced at intervals.

IH

## 46.

## *Kabuto* (helmet) in the form of a cap with a dragonfly and iris, with pale blue lacing

## `浅葱糸威帽子形兜

Edo period, 17th–18th century
Iron, copper, gold, lacquer, and silk
H. of helmet bowl, 24.5 cm (9⅝ in.)
Iwakuni Art Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture

The helmet bowl is shaped like a *mosu*, a type of cap worn by monks, and comprises a six-plate bowl over which are fixed four sheets of iron. The *maedate* (forecrest) is shaped like a dragonfly, while the *ushiro-date* (rear crest) is modeled in the form of five long, narrow leaves of the *barin*, a type of iris. The dragonfly was particularly admired among the samurai because when it hunts, it flies directly forward, never deviating in its path, and was therefore known as *kachi-mushi* ("victorious insect"). The *fukigaeshi*, the portions of the neck guard that are turned back at the front, have *mon* (insignia) of swallow-tail butterflies in gold *maki-e*.

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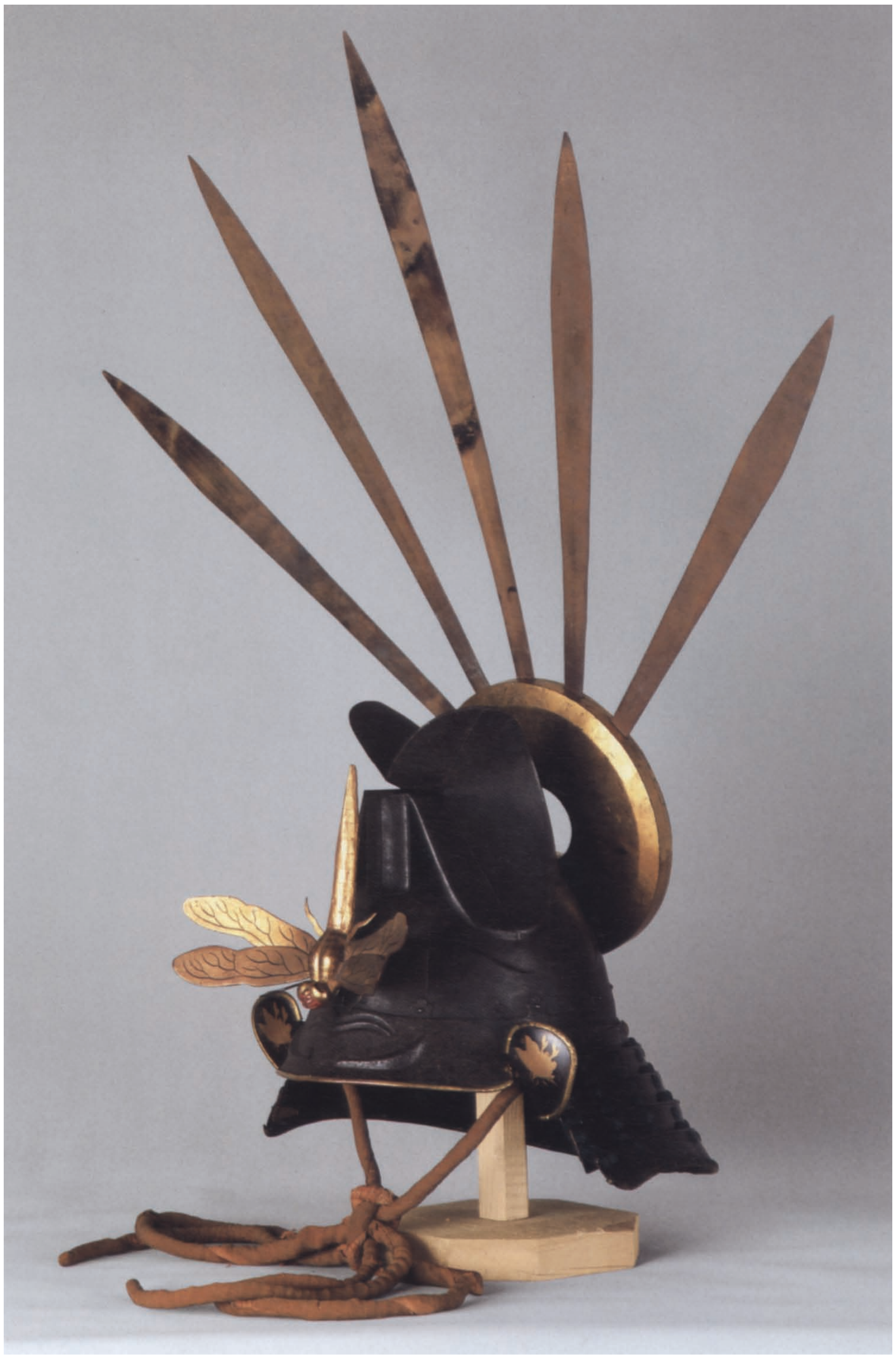

## 47.

## Black-lacquered *kabuto* (helmet) in the shape of rabbit ears

黒漆兎耳形兜鉢

Edo period, 17th century
Iron, lacquer, wood, and papier-mâché
H. overall, 67 cm (26⅜ in.); frontal Diam. of bowl, 22.9 cm (9 in.)
Yasukuni-jinja Shrine, Tokyo

The inner section of the helmet appears to be an Etchū-style *zunari* (head-shaped) bowl. "Etchū" refers to a style of armor favored by the Hosokawa family. The outer part has two narrow but tall ears made of papier-mâché that project powerfully upward. The inner surfaces of the ears, which resemble large pieces of bamboo that have been cut along a diagonal, are lacquered red, creating a striking contrast to the black lacquer on the exterior. On the front of the helmet is a large brim.

The stylish, clearly defined shape of the "rabbit-eared" *kawari-kabuto* (exotic helmet) made it a popular type, and many examples were manufactured. It also provided a highly visible rallying point on the battlefield, perfectly encapsulating the essence of the *kawari-kabuto*.

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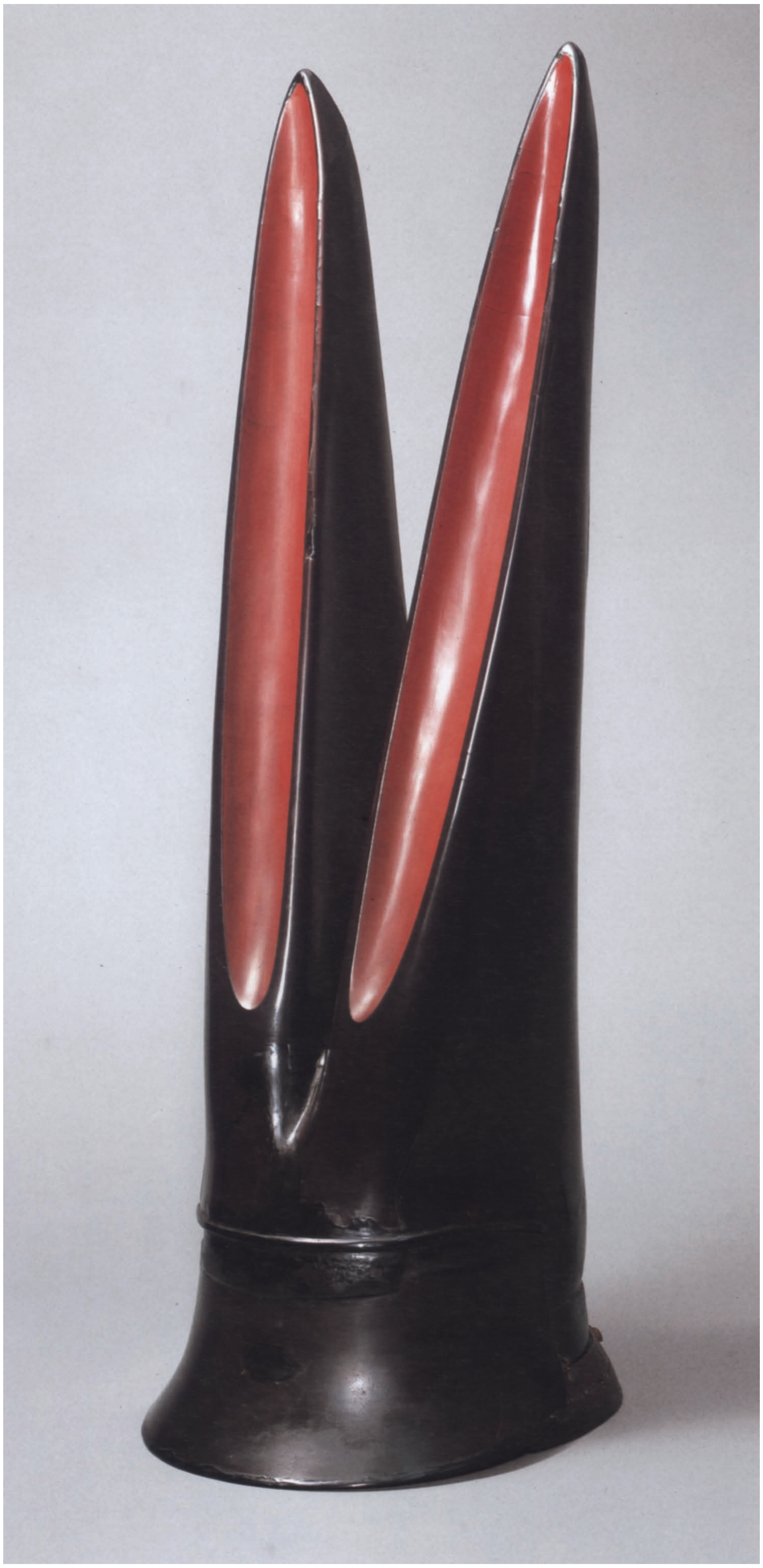
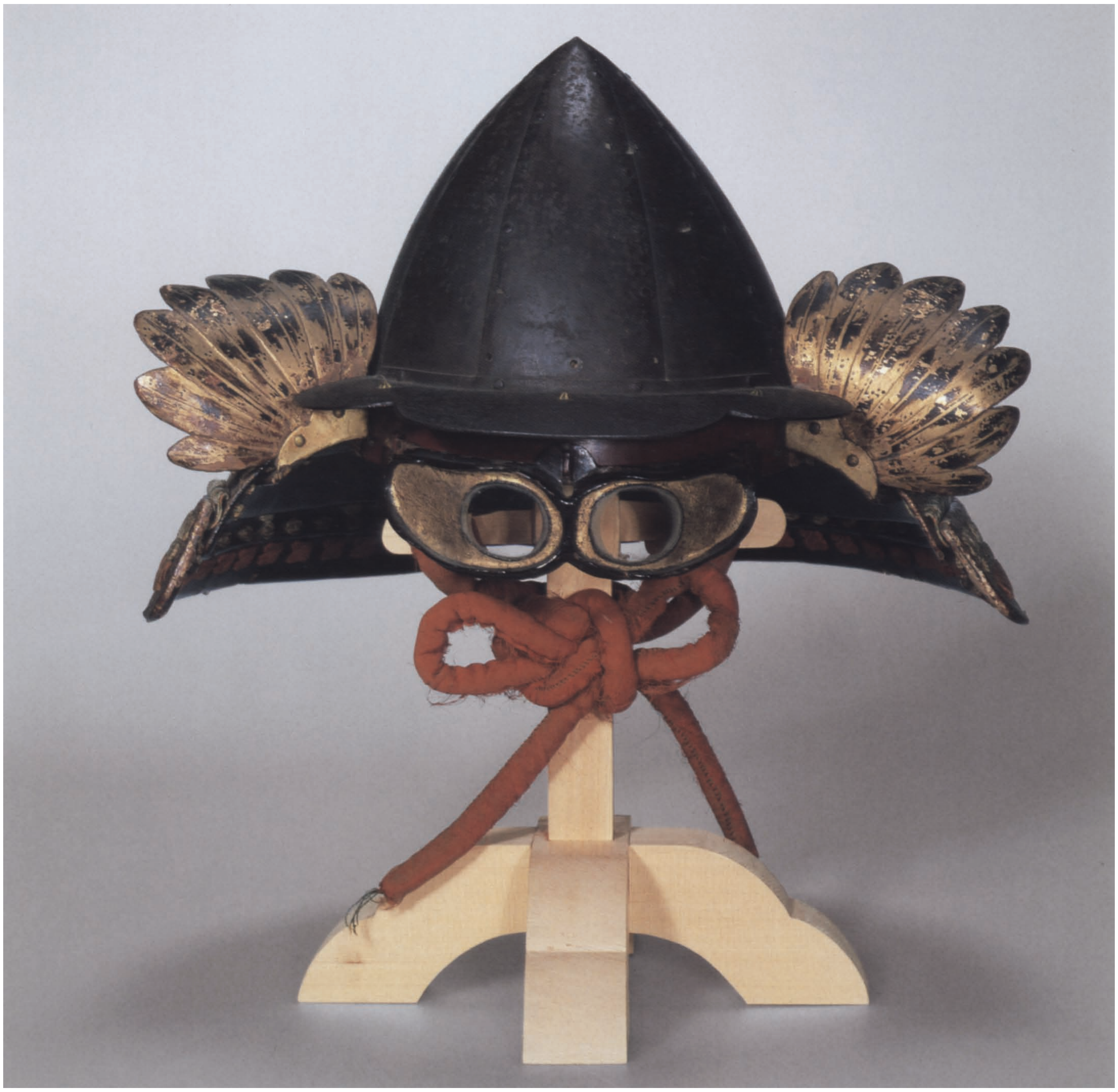




**48.**

### Russet-iron eight-plate *shii-nari kabuto* (acorn-shaped helmet) with spectacles

### 鉄錆地八枚張椎形兜，眼鏡付

Edo period, 18th century
Iron, leather, silk, and gold
H. of bowl, 20.8 cm (8¼ in.)
National Museum of Japanese History, Chiba Prefecture

With its combination of a helmet and pair of spectacles, this piece is an extreme rarity. The *shii-nari* (acorn-shaped) bowl is formed from eight iron plates, with a horizontal brim attached at front. At the bottom of the front of the bowl are three iron brackets that support the spectacles. The *shikoro* (neck guard) is made of three rows of iron *itazane* (solid plates representing overlapping scales) covered in wrinkled leather and laced in white. The *fukigaeshi*—the portions of the neck guard that are turned back at the front—are shaped like leaves of the *yatsude* (fatsia tree) and are made of leather covered in gold leaf. On the underside of the leather of the bowl, the date of the second year of the An'ei era (1705) and the name of the maker, Iwai Chūjirō, are inscribed in black ink. The inscription is believed to date from the time of manufacture. The Iwai were armorers, originally from Nara, who moved to Edo, where they were retained by the Tokugawa shoguns. Branches of the family also worked in Kyōto, Kanazawa, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, and elsewhere.

IH

## 49.

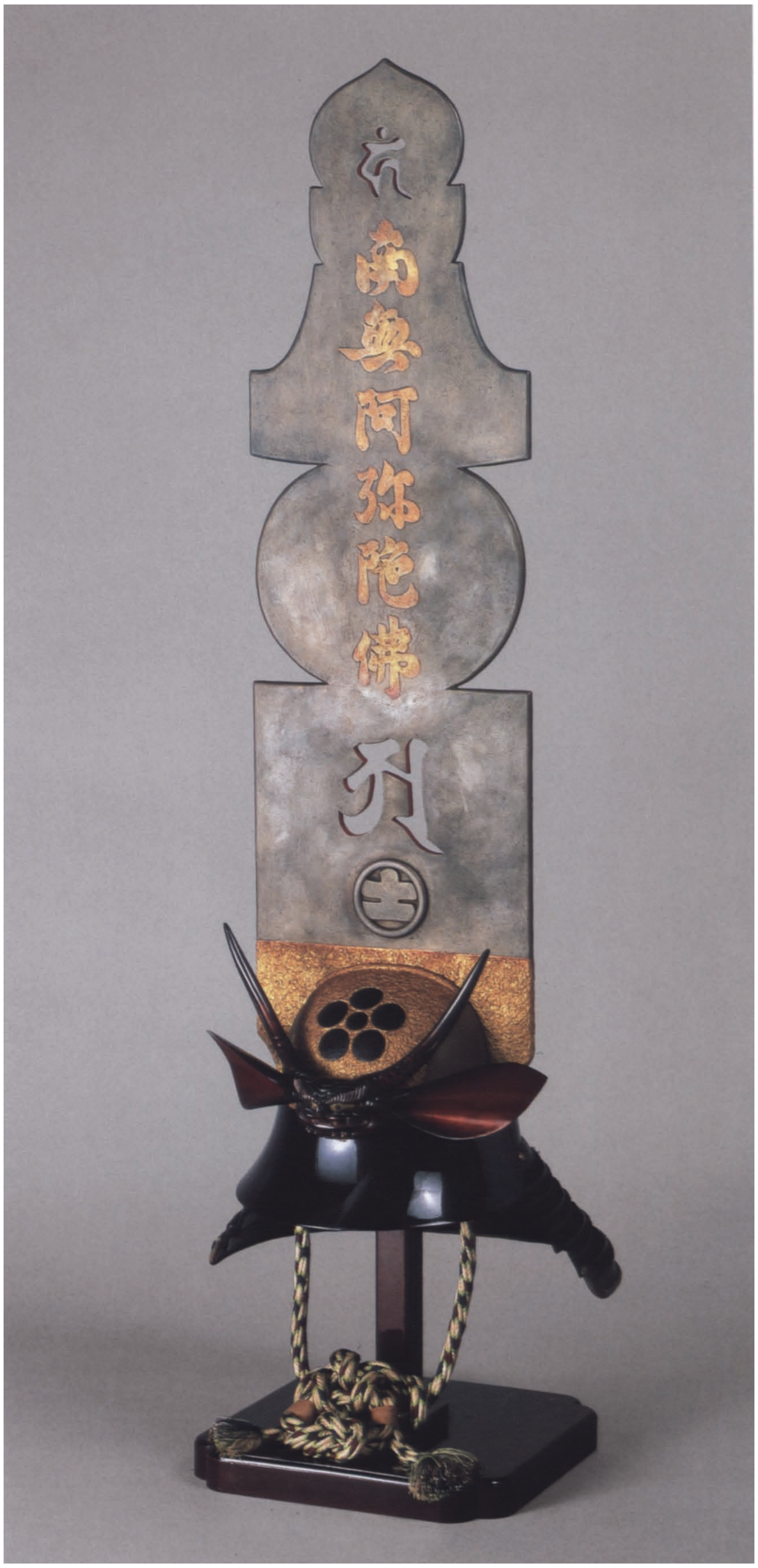
## *Kabuto* (helmet) in the form of a five-storied pagoda

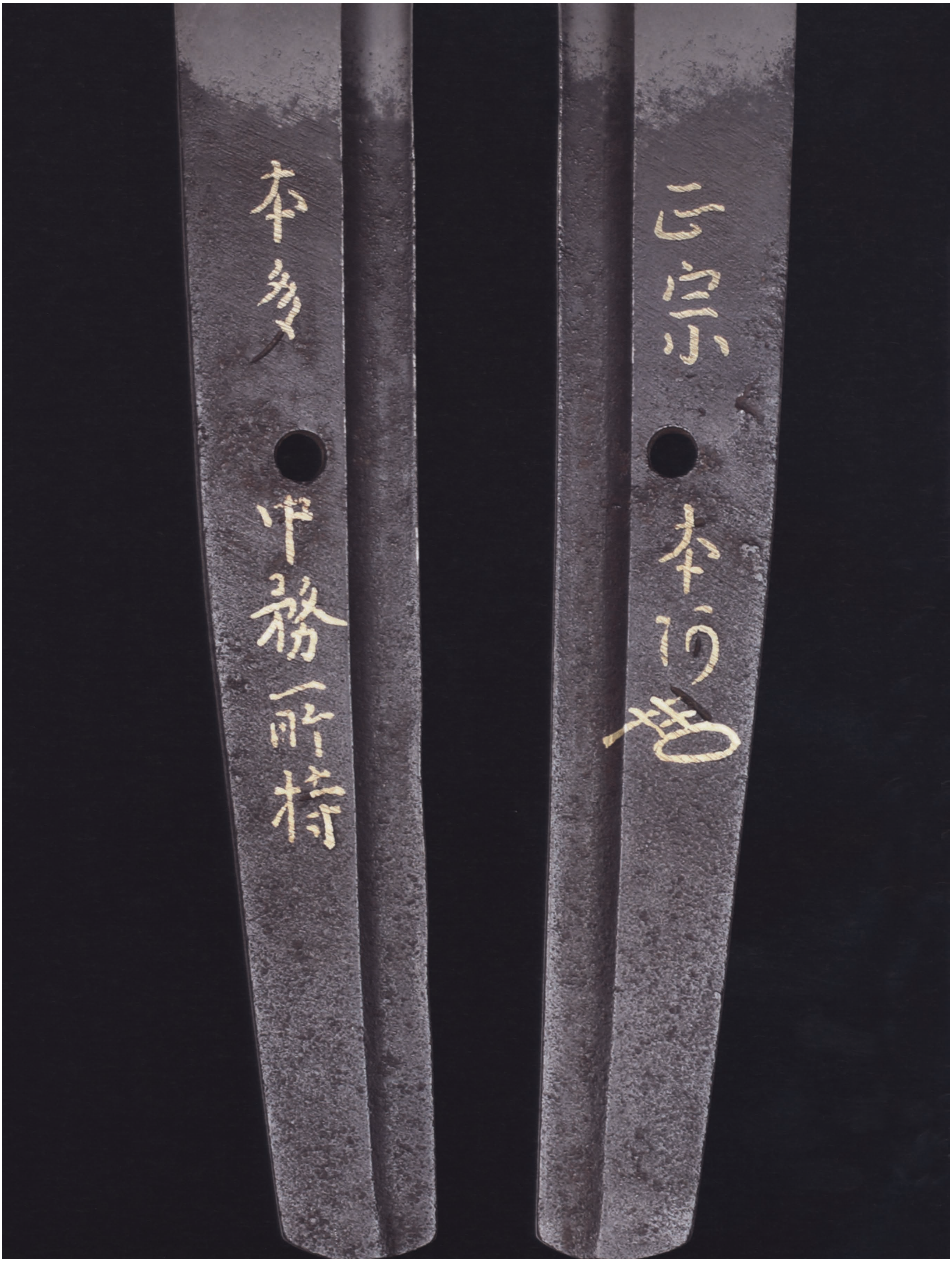
## 五輪塔六字名号頭立兜

Edo period, 18th century
Wood, lacquer, leather, silk, and iron
H. overall, 86.3 cm (34 in.); H. of bowl, 16.9 cm (6⅝ in.); H. of neck guard, 14.9 cm (5⅞ in.)
Kyoto National Museum

Above the bowl of this *zunari* (head-shaped) helmet rises a tall *zudate* (standing headpiece) made of wood with the profile of a five-storied pagoda. Originally a reliquary for Buddhist remains, the five-storied pagoda was a vehicle for memorials and holy praise and is said to represent the five elements: from the bottom, earth, water, fire, wind, and the void. On the front of the headpiece in gold are the six characters for "Namu Amidabutsu" (in the name of Amida Buddha); above and below are pierced Sanskrit characters; and at bottom is an alternative *mon* (insignia) of the Imabari Matsudaira clan set within a circle. On the front of the bowl is the family's *umebachi* (stylized plum blossom) *mon* in black lacquer on a *tataki-nuri* (mottled lacquer) gold ground. The *maedate* (forecrest) is in the form of a grimacing horned demon. The *shikoro* (neck guard) comprises five rows of iron *itazane* plates that are clad in wrinkled leather and joined together in the *sugake* style (parallel double rows spaced at intervals) with dark blue lacings.

A document accompanying the helmet states that Matsudaira Sadamoto, an ardent Buddhist and lord of the Imabari domain (in the northern part of present-day Ehime Prefecture), commissioned it from one of his retainers, an armorer of the Iwai family, in the seventh year of the Kyōhō era (1722). IH




正宗
本阿
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中務所持

HARADA KAZUTOSHI

# HISTORY OF THE JAPANESE SWORD

## EARLY PERIODS

Metal weapons were first being used in Japan by about the Yayoi period (ca. 300 B.C.–A.D. 300), a time when the peoples of Japan were strongly influenced in terms of their cultural and technological development by China and the Korean Peninsula. This influence included, notably, the importation of wet-rice cultivation techniques, and it extended to metallurgy as well. At first edged weapons such as bronze swords and various types of staff weapons were imported from abroad and copied; these were followed by iron examples. Not until the Kofun period (ca. 3rd–7th century), however, did iron weapons become prevalent in Japan.

The Kofun period witnessed the construction of a number of large earthen tombs, or tumuli, by powerful provincial clans (*kofun* means "old tomb"). Many large deposits of armaments, including swords, armor, and horse trappings, have been found in such tombs dating to the fifth and sixth centuries. Similar types of objects have been excavated from Chinese and Korean tombs, suggesting that Japanese advances in the manufacture of weapons and military equipment initially must have been made under the guidance of craftsmen from those countries. Finds in Japanese Kofun-period tombs include straight, single-edged swords (*chokutō*) as well as double-edged swords (*ken*). Most of the *chokutō* from this early period have flat, ridgeless blades that are triangular in section (*hira-zukuri*) (fig. 3.2). Later in the Kofun we also find blades that are roughly trapezoidal in section and have parallel flat sides, one of which is sharply angled toward the cutting edge (*katakiriha-zukuri*). Many were given wooden scabbards with gilt-copper fittings or were clad in thin silver sheet. It is also possible that in rare cases scabbards were lacquered, but in general only the metal components survive.

Kofun-period *chokutō* equipped with a set of mountings, including a scabbard and hilt, are referred to as *tachi*. The names of the known types of Kofun-period *tachi* correspond to the shape of the pommel, the cap at the end of the hilt, including: an open ring encircling the head of a dragon or phoenix (*kantō*, thus the *kantō tachi*); a stylized human fist (*kabutsuchi*); a metal component with a "mountainlike" profile (*keitō*); a rounded metal piece (*entō*); or a rectangle (*hōtō*). The *kantō tachi*, *entō tachi*, and *hōtō tachi* originated in the Korean Peninsula, but the *kabutsuchi tachi* is unique to Japan. The blades of *hōtō tachi* excavated from late Kofun-period tombs are stylistically similar to two *tachi* of the *kiriha-zukuri chokutō* type preserved in the Shitennō-ji, a Buddhist temple in Ōsaka. These blades, which have a ridge near the cutting edge that runs parallel to it along the length of the blade (fig. 3.3), influenced the design of swords made in Japan during the Nara period (710–794) and are reputed to have been owned by Shōtoku Taishi (574–622), son of the Emperor Yōmei and regent for his aunt, the Empress Suiko. An ardent Buddhist, Shōtoku Taishi laid the foundation for the dissemination of Buddhism in Japan, dispatched an official delegation to China, and championed the adoption of Chinese culture, which during the

*Opposite:* Fig. 3.1. Detail of *katana* by Masamune, known as "Nakatsukasa Masamune" (cat. no. 83)

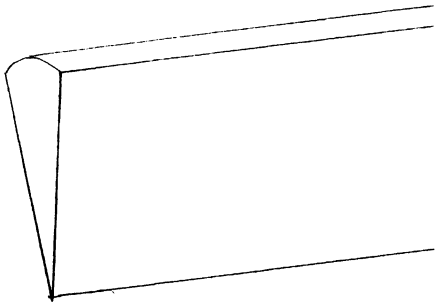


Fig. 3.2. Diagram of a *hira-zukuri* blade

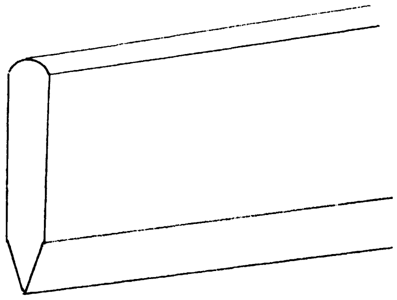


Fig. 3.3. Diagram of a *kiriha-zukuri* blade

Asuka (645–709) and Nara periods was enthusiastically assimilated. Because the two *tachi* in the Shitennō-ji are of superior manufacture to anything else known from this period in Japan, they are considered to have been made in China and doubtless represent the highest technology available at the time.

Although Nara was the center of government and culture during both the Asuka and Nara periods, it appears that swords were being made across Japan during the seventh and eighth centuries. The *Engishiki* (Procedures of the Engi Era)—which details legal practices and other rituals of the Nara period—includes records of the number of swords stored in arsenals controlled by the imperial court throughout Japan, with the exception of Tōhoku and Kyūshū, the northern- and southernmost regions of Honshū, Japan's main island. (Swords were also being made in Tōhoku and Kyūshū, but they were stored in provincial arsenals.) According to the *Engishiki*, the minimum number of swords held in each arsenal was 6 and the maximum was 20, for a total of 522. The surviving swords from this group are housed in the Shōsō-in, the storehouse of the Tōdai-ji, Nara, which also preserves the personal effects of the Emperor Shōmu as well as Buddhist paraphernalia used at the Eye-Opening Ceremony of the Great Buddha, or Daibutsu, held there in 752. The Shōsō-in originally contained 100 swords, but most were removed temporarily during an internal disturbance in 764. The present total, which includes several swords that were added after the end of the disturbance, is 46; they vary in length from 96 to 34 centimeters. In addition to blades of the *hira-zukuri* and *katakiriha-zukuri* types, some of these swords are double-edged (*moroha*) at the point (*kissaki*). They range in quality, possibly reflecting differences in the amount or quality of the iron ore obtainable in the province where each was made as well as the varied levels of swordmaking technology outside the central region of Japan. One *tachi* formerly in the Shōsō-in (cat. no. 54) is an outstanding example of a Nara-period blade. The forging (*kitae*) and the straight *hamon*—the tempering pattern along the cutting edge—are superior to those of the other Shōsō-in swords, an indication of the extent to which Japanese makers of the period had mastered complex forging techniques.

## HEIAN PERIOD

Straight swords such as the *chokutō* preserved in the Shōsō-in continued to be produced well into the middle of the Heian period (794–1185), when the curved sword—the *Nihon-to*, or the "true" Japanese sword—made its first appearance. Although it is not known exactly when the straight sword evolved into the curved *tachi*, archaeological evidence points to some overlap between the two, with straight swords remaining in use until at least the late tenth century. In particular, an example of a *chokutō* was found in present-day Tokushima Prefecture along with a funerary urn containing coins in circulation between 907 and 957. (These imperial issue copper coins date to the Engi era [901–923] and are thus known as *Engi-tsūhō*.) The oldest known dated curved *tachi*, by the swordsmith Naminohira Yukimasa, is signed YUKIMASA HEIJI GANNEN HACHI GATSU FUTSUKA (Yukimasa, the second day of the eighth month of the first year of the Heiji era [1159]). According to Muromachi-period documents, the earliest smiths who made curved swords were Yasutsuna (see cat. no. 57) of Hōki province (in present-day Tottori Prefecture) and Sanjō Munechika (see cat. no. 56) of Yamashiro province (in present-day Kyōto Prefecture). Yasutsuna was formerly believed to have been active about the Daidō era (806–809), but certain aspects of his style do not support such an early date. Munechika, by comparison, was recorded as working during the reign of the Emperor Ichijō (986–1010), and his style is much older than that of Yasutsuna and other Heian-period smiths. It is now generally accepted that Munechika was active in the early eleventh century, and it can be conjectured that the curved and ridged blade, a form known as *shinogi-zukuri* (fig. 3.4), was introduced sometime during the second half of the tenth century, but at present the exact process of its development remains unknown.

Although the manufacture of the curved sword became widespread in Japan during the eleventh century, until the twelfth century swordsmithing remained limited to centers in Kyōto, Nara, Hōki, Bizen, Bitchū, Chikugo, and Satsuma, each of which developed its own distinctive groups of smiths, or schools. Since ancient times Kyōto and Nara had been loci of government and culture, and the nearby provinces of Bizen and Bitchū (in present-day Okayama Prefecture) contained the Chūgoku mountain range, source of the finest quality sand iron (*satetsu*), the basic raw material for swordmaking (see the discussion of swordmaking by Ogawa Morihiro in this volume). Some of the notable smiths active in Kyōto at the time were Yoshiie, Kuninaga, and Kanenaga of the Sanjō group, which had been established by Munechika. In Nara, the Senjuin group was active, and in Hōki, along with Yasutsuna, such

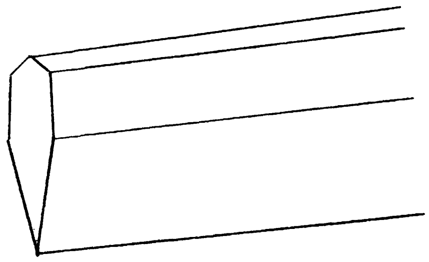


Fig. 3.4. Diagram of a *shinogi-zukuri* blade

celebrated smiths as Sanemori and Yasuie (see cat. no. 58) flourished. The numerous smiths active in Bizen belonged to what is referred to as the *Ko*-Bizen, or "Old Bizen" group, including Tomonari, Masatsune (see cat. no. 59), Kanehira (see cat. no. 60), and Nobufusa (see cat. no. 61). Moritsugu and Sadatsugu of the Aoe group were active in Bitchū; Mitsuyo was prominent in Chikugo; and in Satsuma there were the Naminohira smiths, among them Yukiyasu and Yukimasa.

### KAMAKURA PERIOD

The distribution of swordsmiths within Japan began to change after 1185, when Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199) defeated the rival Taira (Heike) clan and established Japan's first military government, or *bakufu*, in Kamakura, near present-day Tokyo. During the Kamakura period (1185–1333), often referred to as Japan's medieval age, swordsmiths could be found throughout most of the country, including Kamakura, as the seat of the *bakufu*. In Kyōto, the Sanjō group gave way to the emerging Awataguchi school, whose adherents included such famous smiths as Kunitomo, Hisakuni (see cat. no. 66), Kunitsuna, Kuniyoshi (see cat. no. 69), and Yoshimitsu (see cat. no. 68). The Awataguchi school was followed in turn by the Rai school, founded by Kuniyuki, which flourished during the middle Kamakura period. Both schools developed styles characterized by deeply curved, elegantly shaped *tachi* with exquisite forging (*kitae*) and a predominantly straight (*suguha*) *hamon*.

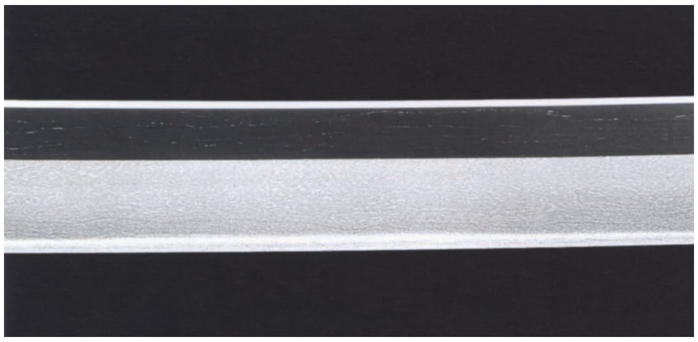


Fig. 3.5. Straight tempering pattern (*suguha hamon*) and straight forging grain (*masame hada*). Tegai school, 13th century

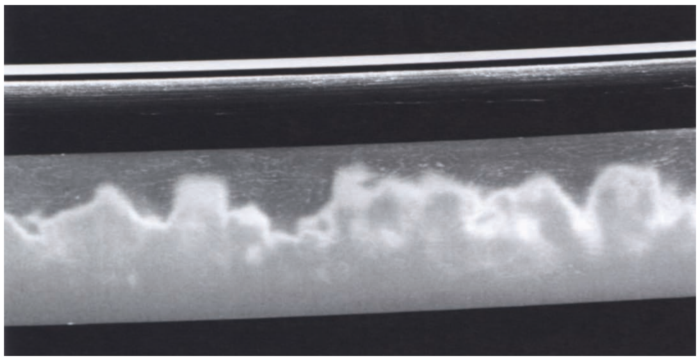


Fig. 3.6. Tempering pattern (*hamon*) with clove shapes (*chōji*). Sukezane, 13th century (detail of cat. no. 64)

In Yamato (present-day Nara Prefecture), in addition to the Senjuin group, the Tegai, Taema, Shikkake, and Hōshō groups were active, all of them known for their comparatively conservative, straight *hamon* and straight forging grain referred to as *masame* (fig. 3.5). In Bizen province, the Fukuoka Ichimonji group, founded by Norimune, replaced the *Ko*-Bizen group during the early Kamakura period. In the middle Kamakura period, Sukezane (see cat. no. 64), Yoshifusa (see cat. no. 63), Norifusa, and other smiths produced sword blades with an extravagant *hamon* referred to as *chōji* ("clove-shaped") after its resemblance to the fruit of the clove or possibly to the daphne flower (the etymology of the term is ambiguous) (fig. 3.6). After the decline of the Fukuoka Ichimonji, the Osafune group rose to prominence, with four successive generations—Mitsutada (see cat. no. 76), Nagamitsu (see cat. nos. 77, 78), Kagemitsu (see cat. no. 80), and Kanemitsu—coming together with their pupils and other smiths whom they had influenced to form a much larger school active in the village of Osafune (in present-day Okayama Prefecture). The Osafune school eventually produced a number of famous smiths and flourished from the late thirteenth to the late sixteenth century, making it the longest continuously active group of swordsmiths in Japan.

As noted above, Kamakura, as the seat of the *bakufu*, was of growing importance in relation to the well-established swordsmithing centers. Accordingly, the military government summoned smiths there from other regions, notably Kunitsuna of the Awataguchi group in Kyōto, Sukezane of the Ichimonji group in Bizen, and Kunimune from a branch of the Osafune school. They were succeeded in Kamakura by Shintogo Kunimitsu (see cat. no. 83)—who it is said was originally from Kyōto—from whose school emerged Masamune (see cat. nos. 85, 86), often referred to as the greatest of all Japanese swordsmiths. Masamune's blades are characterized by a strong forging pattern (*kitae-hada*) called *itame* ("wood plank"), a result of the particular way he mixed hard and soft steels; a large *hamon* in the shape of gently undulating lines or waves (*notare*); and bright particles (*nie*) in the *hamon* (*nie* are crystals of martensitic steel large enough to be seen with the naked eye). The *kitae-hada*—the variable grain and texture of the surface steel of a blade—is in fact one of the most important characteristics of the Japanese sword, and Masamune's manufacturing method proved enormously influential not only on other Kamakura-period smiths but on all subsequent Japanese swordsmiths.

In general, swords made from the Heian to the Kamakura period can be characterized as being between 75 and

80 centimeters in length with an overall curvature (*sori*) of about 2.5 to 3 centimeters. Although the shape of the curve of these swords is typically quite elegant, there was a brief vogue during the middle Kamakura period for broad, imposing blades, such as examples by Sukezane (see cat. no. 64).

### NANBOKUCHŌ PERIOD

With the fall of the Kamakura *bakufu* in 1333, Ashikaga Takauji (r. 1338–58), head of a powerful family of warriors, established a new military government in Kyōto. From about 1334 to 1392, however, the military class as well as the aristocracy were embroiled in near continuous strife. During this time, known as the Nanbokuchō period, the imperial family was divided into two factions (the so-called Northern and Southern Courts), and the Japanese sword underwent substantial changes. Exceedingly long swords known as *ōdachi* ("great" *tachi*), which average between 90 and 130 centimeters in length (see, e.g., cat. no. 91, by Tomomitsu), were made from about 1350 to 1367. Carried across the back (fig. 3.7), they were used only during the Nanbokuchō period. When the imperial house was reunited during the Muromachi period, the average sword length returned to 75 centimeters, or to about the same as it had been during the Heian and Kamakura periods (75–80 cm).

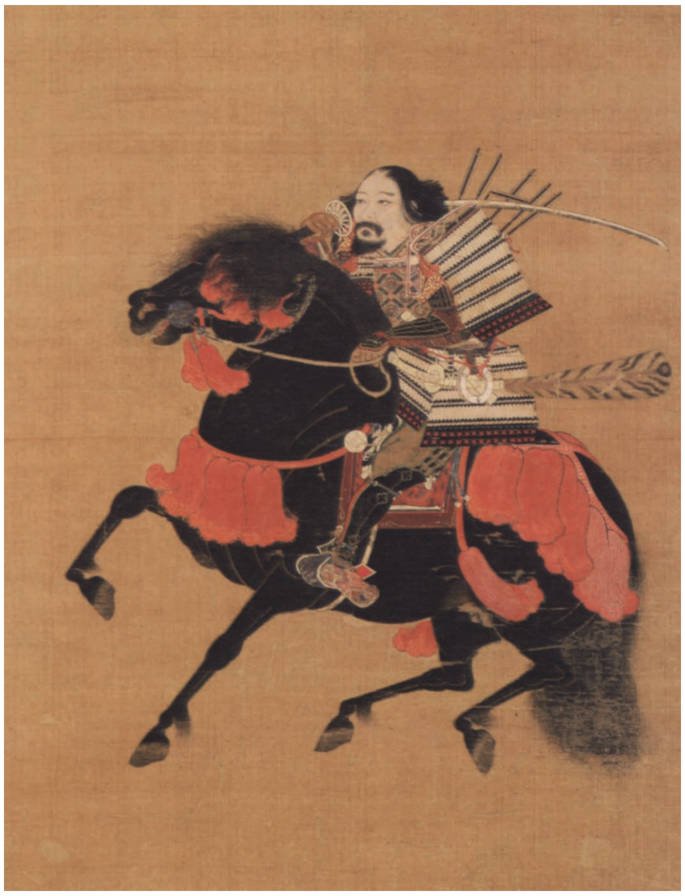


Fig. 3.7. *Mounted Warrior*. Scroll, Nanbokuchō period, 14th century. Kyoto National Museum

The swordmaking centers of the Nanbokuchō period were roughly the same as those during the Kamakura period. In Kyōto, the Nobukuni and Hasebe schools were active alongside the Rai school. Sadamune (see cat. no. 87), Hiromitsu, and Akihiro continued working at Kamakura, though they were less prominent than before the fall of the *bakufu*. The five schools active earlier in Yamato also continued but, as in Kamakura, on a reduced scale. In comparison, the Osafune group in Bizen flourished, centered on smiths such as Kanemitsu (son of Kagemitsu, active in the late Kamakura period), Tomomitsu (see cat. no. 91), and Motomitsu; it also included a number of smiths, such as Chogi and Motoshige, who belonged to different lineages or branches of the Osafune school.

In addition to the smiths in these established regions, a smith named Kaneuji (see cat. no. 93) is said to have migrated to Mino province (present-day Gifu Prefecture) from Yamato and there made swords in the style of Masamune. During the Muromachi period, the Mino smiths would grow in prominence, and eventually the majority of smiths working in Japan were active there, notably because of the proximity of Mino to Kyōto, the center of the period's sustained military activity.

### MUROMACHI PERIOD

During the turbulent Muromachi period (1392–1573), the emperor conferred the title of shogun—supreme military commander—on successive generations of the Ashikaga clan even as provincial daimyo (feudal lords) in some cases surpassed the Ashikaga both politically and economically. This period also witnessed the single greatest change in the form of the Japanese sword: the transformation from the *tachi* to the type of sword known as *uchigatana*. Since the Heian period, samurai had traditionally carried their swords in mountings suspended from the waist with cords, with the cutting edge of the sword facing down. Beginning about the middle of the fifteenth century, they started to wear their swords thrust through the belt at the waist, with the cutting edge facing up. At first only the lower classes of samurai wore their swords in this fashion, but gradually higher classes of samurai came to follow suit. By the second half of the sixteenth century, it was standard for samurai to wear two swords—one long and one short—through the belt, and this pairing of swords (*daishō*) was formalized during the Edo period. The Japanese sword thus falls generally into one of three classifications: *tachi*, suspended with cords with the edge down, in use from the Heian through the early Muromachi periods; *katana*, the longer of the two swords carried through the belt, in use beginning about the middle Muromachi period; and *wakizashi*, the shorter sword worn through the belt along with a *katana*.

Cultural knowledge and social standing came to be seen as essential qualities in the upper level of the military class (samurai) during the Muromachi period. This was the expectation of courtiers, long the mainstays of Japanese culture, once the seat of the *bakufu* moved from Kamakura to Kyōto, home of the imperial court, and samurai began to mix socially with the aristocracy. Concomitant with this shift in how samurai were veiwed was a rise in the social standing of those smiths who made swords suitable for use by the shogun and samurai. Although in general the newest or latest forms of weapons are most desirable from a military standpoint, in the case of the Japanese sword, beginning in the fifteenth century, those blades made in the past by famous smiths came to be greatly valued for their rarity, beauty, and efficacy, and collections of treasured swords began to be assembled by daimyo and wealthier samurai. The great Heian- and Kamakura-period swords were too long to be used in the style of combat prevalent in the second half of the sixteenth century, however, and it became necessary to shorten them to acceptable lengths. To achieve this, older swords were sometimes cut down from the end of the tang (*nakago*)—the portion that fits into the hilt—and the length of the tang also was sometimes adjusted by filing down the bottom of the cutting edge and the back of the blade. This process, called *suriage*, occurred mostly during the Momoyama period (mid- to late 16th century), but the oldest known example of such a sword is a *suriage tachi* by Shigetsugu of the Bitchū Aoe group, which was shortened in 1541, during the Muromachi period. After being reduced from 75 to 68 centimeters, it is roughly the length of contemporary Muromachi-period swords such as those by Sukesada of Bizen and the Mino smiths.

Among smiths active during the Muromachi period, the Osafune group of Bizen continued to flourish: Morimitsu and Yasumitsu (see cat. no. 94) followed by Norimitsu were prominent in the early period, and Tadamitsu, Katsumitsu (see cat. no. 95), and Sukesada in the late period (in fact, there were some fifty smiths by the name of "Sukesada" at the time). The majority of Muromachi smiths worked in Mino, however, and almost all used the character *kane*—after Kaneuji, founder of the school—as the first part of their name. In both Bizen and Mino, in addition to well-crafted swords, quantities of crudely made blades were produced for export to China and to meet increased demand during the Sengoku-jidai, or "Age of Wars," in the late Muromachi period, a time of extreme political fragmentation that began with the internecine Ōnin War of 1467 and continued well into the sixteenth century.

## MOMOYAMA PERIOD

Progress toward the eventual unification of Japan's warring provinces was made by the powerful warrior Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) in the sixteenth century. The process was mostly completed by his general, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), who defeated a number of powerful daimyo, culminating with his victory over the rival Hōjō family of Odawara on August 12, 1590. Following Hideyoshi's death, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) achieved near total pacification of Japan after key victories at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and the seige of Ōsaka Castle in 1615.

During these decades of struggle among the daimyo, the Japanese sword underwent further substantial changes, particularly between the last years of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's rule and the rise of Tokugawa Ieyasu. For one, the *katana* largely replaced the *tachi* because it was easier to use on foot in conjunction with a spear or firearm. In addition, swordsmiths began to migrate from regions where the great clans had had their homes—or from where there were good supplies of iron ore—to Kyōto, Ōsaka, and other castle towns where daimyo were in residence. For example, Shimosaka Yasutsugu (see cat. no. 103) of Echizen province (in present-day Fukui Prefecture) went to live in Edo, seat of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, while Kunihiro (see cat. no. 101) of Hyūga province (present-day Miyazaki Prefecture) nurtured pupils in Kyōto and there formed the basis for a number of groups that would later flourish in Kyōto and Ōsaka during the Edo period. Some smiths—such as Kunikane in Sendai (see cat. no. 104), Kanewaka in Kanazawa, Masatsune and Ujifusa in Nagoya, Shigekuni in Wakayama, Teruhiro in Hiroshima, and Tadayoshi in Saga (see cat. no. 100)—worked directly under the patronage of the daimyo in those castle towns.

These important fundamental changes and trends in swordmaking reached a peak during the Keicho era (1596–1614), and swords made then are thus known as Keicho *shintō*. The word *shintō* ("new swords") was adopted at this time to distinguish swords made from this period on from earlier blades, which were known as *kotō* ("old swords"). At the time, *kotō* were expensive and more highly regarded than the new swords, and even the great smiths of the day, such as Kunihiro, were not greatly esteemed. In an attempt to raise awareness of, and interest in, contemporary smiths, a book listing the names of *shintō* swordsmiths along with the prices of their works—the *Araba Meizukushi* (Names of New Swordsmiths), by Kanda Hakuryushi—was published in 1721.

## EDO PERIOD

In 1603 Tokugawa Ieyasu, given the title of shogun by the emperor, founded the dynastic Tokugawa shogunate and established his *bakufu* in Edo (modern Tokyo), thus ushering in the Edo period (1603–1868), a time of relative peace and continuous prosperity in Japan. The Tokugawa *bakufu* adopted Chinese Confucianism and, following its tenets, sought to instill in the samurai a behavioral code rooted in exemplary virtue and on absolute fealty to their lord. This set of governing principles, known as Bushido (The Way of the Warrior), permeated deep into Japanese society, most notably for samurai in its emphasis on the importance of name and family, the fear of shame, and the need for clarity of mind when facing death. The sword, which according to a popular saying was "the spirit of the samurai," became a symbolic treasure, exalted as the most important of the *omote-dōgu* ("external equipment," meaning arms and armor) above more prosaic objects made for everyday use and leisure, which were regarded as *oku-dōgu*, or "interior equipment."

In a practice dating to the Heian period, before going to war samurai dedicated swords and armor to Shinto shrines and prayed for success. After victory in battle, samurai again dedicated such objects, and daimyo rewarded individual samurai for military successes with gifts of land as well swords. The presentation of swords was especially prevalent during the Sengoku-jidai as an important means of cultivating close bonds between a lord and his retainers. Such exchanges of gifts between shogun and daimyo became ritualized during the Edo period, as boys from the shogun's family would be given swords by daimyo on occasions such as birthdays, coming-of-age ceremonies, marriages, and their eventual succession as shogun. In the same spirit, the shogun would present a sword to a daimyo to celebrate the inheritance of an estate, a first audience with the shogun, a wedding, and so on. Daimyo treasured the swords given to them by the shogun as family heirlooms, but sometimes they also returned them to the shogun to celebrate a particularly auspicious occasion.

The giving and receiving of swords took little account of the smiths who made them until the mid-Muromachi period, when specialists who superintended the art objects and equipment in the household of the Ashikaga shoguns began to select swords by smiths whose works were considered worthy of his ownership. Sword connoisseurs wrote books—called *hidensho* ("secret") because their knowledge was closely guarded—outlining how to judge and appreciate fine swords and recording the characteristics of the works of important smiths. This gave rise to specialist sword appraisers (*kantei-ka*), among whom the most prominent was the Hon'ami family, who were sword polishers by profession but who also took care of the leading daimyo's swords and undertook appraisals. When swords were exchanged between shogun and daimyo or between two daimyo, they were accompanied by a certificate of appraisal (*kantei-sho*) from the Hon'ami family as proof of authenticity and as a statement of the sword's monetary value. For shogun and daimyo alike, swords were multifaceted objects of reverence: in spiritual terms, they were proof of the military achievements of their ancestors, and in practical terms, they were lethal weapons of war but also coveted and useful diplomatic gifts.

A law passed in 1650 restricted the length of swords to about 69 centimeters, which became the accepted Edo-period standard. Many smiths came to live in Edo because it was the seat of government; many others settled in Ōsaka, Japan's commercial center. Edo smiths included Nagasone Kotetsu (see cat. no. 105), whose swords are said to be the keenest of all, Yamato no kami Yasusada, the Hojoji group, and the Edo Ishido group. Although the *hamon* of the Edo smiths is not as elegant as that of other groups, many of their swords are superior cutting weapons and are inscribed on the tang with the results of cutting tests as an indication of their efficacy (see, e.g., cat. no. 105). In Ōsaka, two of the most important smiths were Tsuda Sukehiro (see cat. no. 106), whose *toranba hamon*, in the form of large, "ocean"-type waves, became the dominant fashion, and Inoue Shinkai, who specialized in a *hamon* characterized by gentler waves and widely dispersed *nie* and who thus came to be known as the "Ōsaka Masamune."

As the peace of the Edo period continued into the eighteenth century, the demand for swords fell. To counter what he saw as a decline in the martial spirit of the samurai, in 1719 the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune, had a list compiled of the most famous swords in Japan. These were typically swords with distinguished histories, such as those that had been used by military commanders from the Heian to the Nanbokuchō periods. The list was headed by Masamune, Awataguchi Yoshimitsu, and Go no Yoshihiro, who were dubbed the "Three Famous Smiths" (*Sansaku*). As a matter of prestige, it became important for daimyo to own swords by these smiths, which had the effect of driving up the prices of their finest works (*meito*). In 1720 Yoshimune selected Miyakawa Masakiyo (see cat. no. 107) and Ippei Yasukiyo of Satsuma (present-day Kagoshima Prefecture), and Nobukuni Shigekane of Chikuzen (present-day Fukuoka Prefecture) from among Japan's active smiths and summoned them to Edo to forge swords before him. These smiths were granted the right to carve part of the *mon* (hereditary insignia) of the shogun's clan on the tangs of their blades.

In the late Edo period, Suishinshi Masahide, a swordsmith originally from Yamagata who moved to Edo—by then the center of Japanese swordmaking—wrote a treatise on the manufacture of swords. Although earlier in his career Masahide had adopted the styles of the Ōsaka smiths Sukehiro and Shinkai, he later concluded that the extravagant *hamon* of those makers left a blade more susceptible to damage compared to those made in Bizen during the Nanbokuchō period. He thus decided to make swords in the Bizen tradition, believing that they would not readily break and, moreover, that they would cut well. Masahide enjoyed wide success, and through his teachings (he eventually had more than a hundred pupils) he helped propagate the Bizen style throughout Japan. His followers in Edo—Taikei Naotane, Hosokawa Masayoshi, and, from a different lineage, Koyama Munetsugu—all produced excellent blades in the Bizen style. Minamoto Kiyomaro (see cat. no. 108) from Shinano province (present-day Nagano Prefecture) also achieved great renown by adopting the shape, strong forging, and *hamon* of the Nanbokuchō-period smith Kaneuji of Mino.

When the Edo *bakufu* fell in 1868 and the Meiji government was established, Japan entered a period of rapid modernization following the example of America and Europe. In 1876 a law was passed prohibiting the carrying of swords in public (*Haitō Rei*), which signified not only the end of the production of swords as practical weapons but also the end of the traditional samurai way of life and the privileged place of the samurai in Japanese society.

## 50.

## Blade for a *chokutō* (straight, single-edged sword)

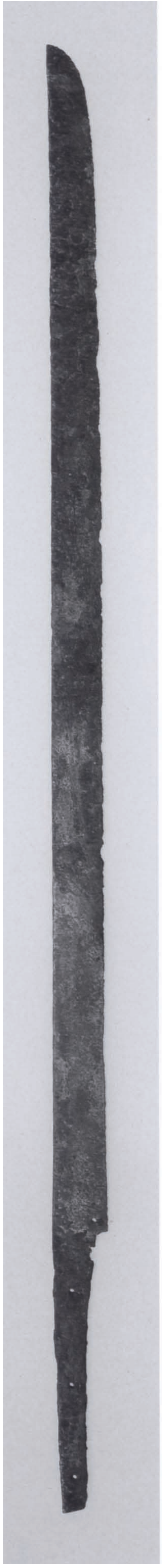
国宝 直刀 熊本県江田船山古墳出土

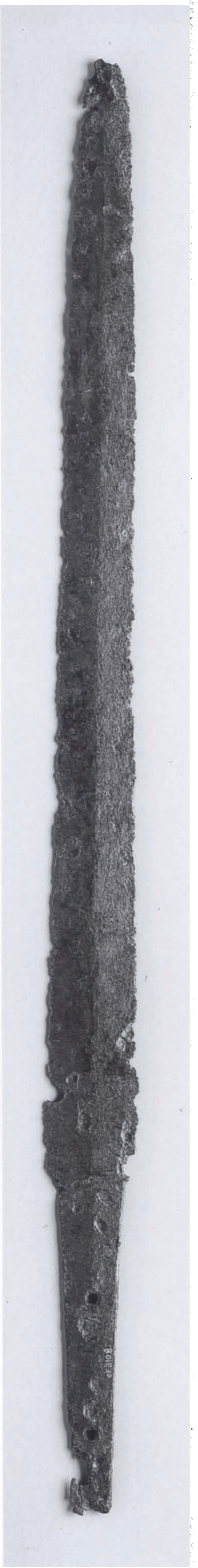
Kofun period, 5th century
Steel
L. including tang, 113 cm (44½ in.); L. of blade, 92 cm (36¼ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**

Iron swords appeared in the northern part of Kyūshū, the most southerly of Japan's main islands, about the first or second century A.D., in the mid-Yayoi period. They replaced existing bronze weapons and later spread north to the Kinki and Kantō regions. Most of the earliest iron swords were straight and double edged (*ken*). Gradually the number of single-edged blades increased, as did the length of such blades.

The Eda Funayama tomb in Kikusui Machi (Kumamoto Prefecture, in Kyūshū) is a *zenpō koen* (keyhole-shaped) tomb, or tumulus, whose mound is 62 meters long. Many grave goods have been excavated from the tomb: weapons include seven iron *ken*-type swords (see cat. no. 51), twelve *chokutō*, including this example; two simple *kantō tachi* (swords with ring pommels), and some *hoko* (a type of socketed spear). Armor, personal adornments, and horse trappings have also been found.

One of the larger *chokutō* excavated from the Eda Funayama tomb is inscribed with the name of an emperor and decorated with horse, bird, and flower motifs in silver inlay. The blade is *hira-zukuri* in form (flat, ridgeless, and triangular in section), and although there is no *mune machi* (a notch in the back side of the blade at the beginning of the tang), the *ha machi* (a similar notch on the cutting-edge side of the blade) is deep. This type of blade evolved into the *kiri-ha* type of *chokutō*—with a notch on both sides—about the seventh or eighth century. HK





## 51.

## Blade for a *ken* (straight, double-edged sword)

剣 熊本県江田船山古墳出土

Kofun period, 5th century
Steel
L. 59.7 cm (23½ in.)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Gift of Bashford Dean, by exchange, 1906
06.310.8

The *ken*, a sword with a straight, double-edged blade based on Chinese prototypes, was used in Japan from at least the third to the sixth century A.D. Beginning about the fifth century, the *ken* was gradually superseded by the straight, single-edged sword (*chokutō*), the type from which all later Japanese swords developed. This *ken* was discovered in one of Japan's most famous early burial mounds (*kofun*), known as Eda Funayama, located in present-day Kumamoto Prefecture, in the southern part of the country. The mound, which was first excavated in 1873, yielded many rare items, including jewelry, crowns, ceremonial shoes, armor parts, mirrors, and swords, all of very high quality (see cat. no. 50). Surviving swords from this period are extremely rare and show the earliest stages in the development of the Japanese sword blade. This example was given to the Metropolitan Museum in 1906 as part of an exchange of objects with the Imperial Museum, Tokyo (now the Tokyo National Museum) arranged by Dr. Bashford Dean (1876–1928), the Metropolitan Museum's first curator of arms and armor. In 1965 the remaining finds from the excavation were officially designated as National Treasures—the highest ranking given to cultural objects in Japan—and are now in the collection of Tokyo National Museum.

### 52.

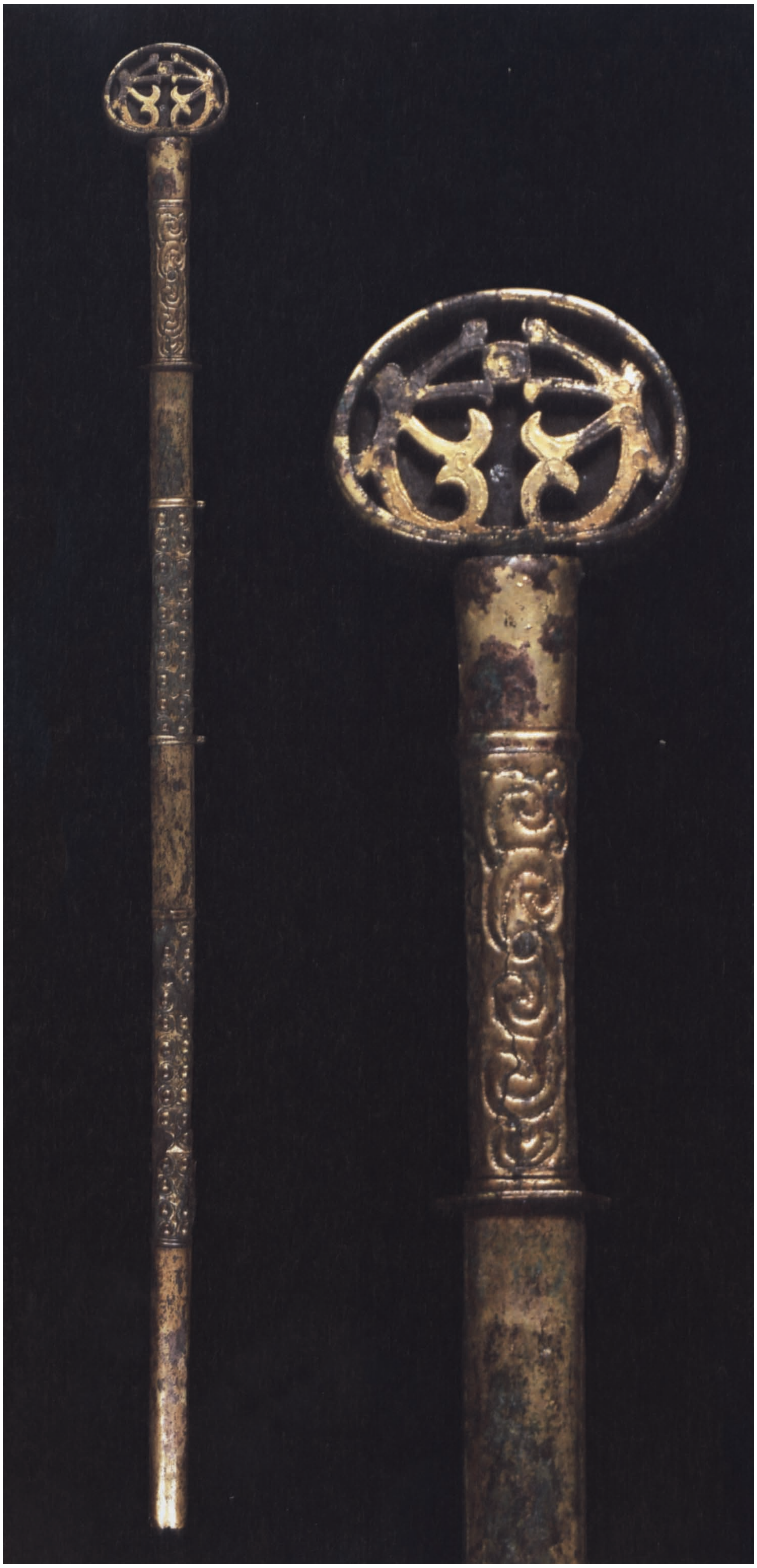
## *Kantō tachi* mounting with a pair of dragons in pommel

### 双龍環頭大刀

Kofun period, 6th century
Iron, copper, and gold
L. 98 cm (38⅝ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

Kofun-period long swords with mountings, called *tachi*, were initially influenced by blades from Han-dynasty China. Later they copied the shape of swords from the Korean Peninsula. The *kantō tachi*, which has a ring-shaped pommel, is one such form. It appeared in Japan about the first or second century A.D. and was the most common type of Kofun-period mounting. At first the ring pommel was made integral with the iron blade, as in China. Later, the mounting became a separate component, and it was given either a wrought or cast gilt-bronze ring pommel containing either phoenixes or dragons.

This *kantō tachi* has a pair of dragons in the pommel. *Karakusa* (foliate scrollwork) is depicted with punch engraving on the hilt, and circles are embossed on the scabbard; both hilt and scabbard are covered in gilt-copper sheet. The dragons are stylized and somewhat flat, and the design lacks liveliness, indicating that it had become somewhat conventionalized by this time. HK



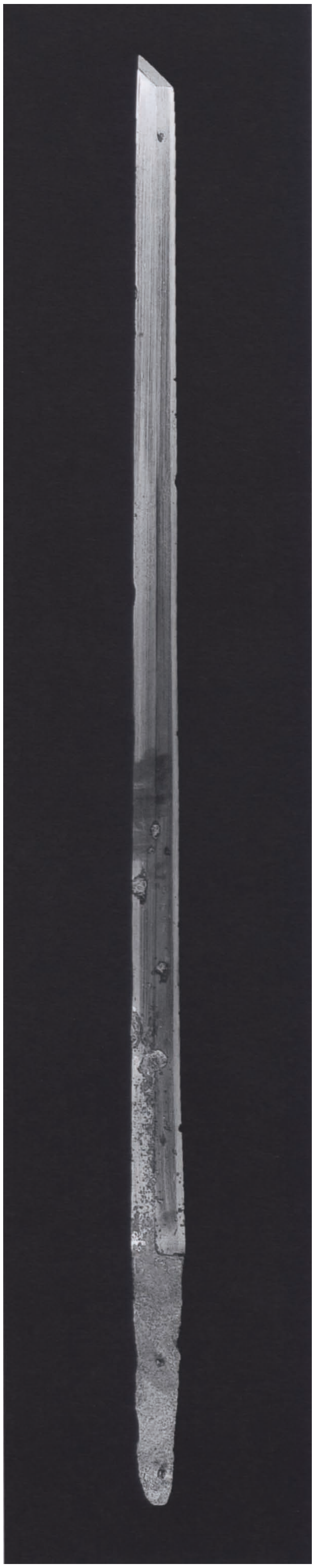
## 53.
## Blade for a *chokutō* (straight, single-edged sword), with inscription inlaid in gold
## 重要文化財 金錯銘直刀

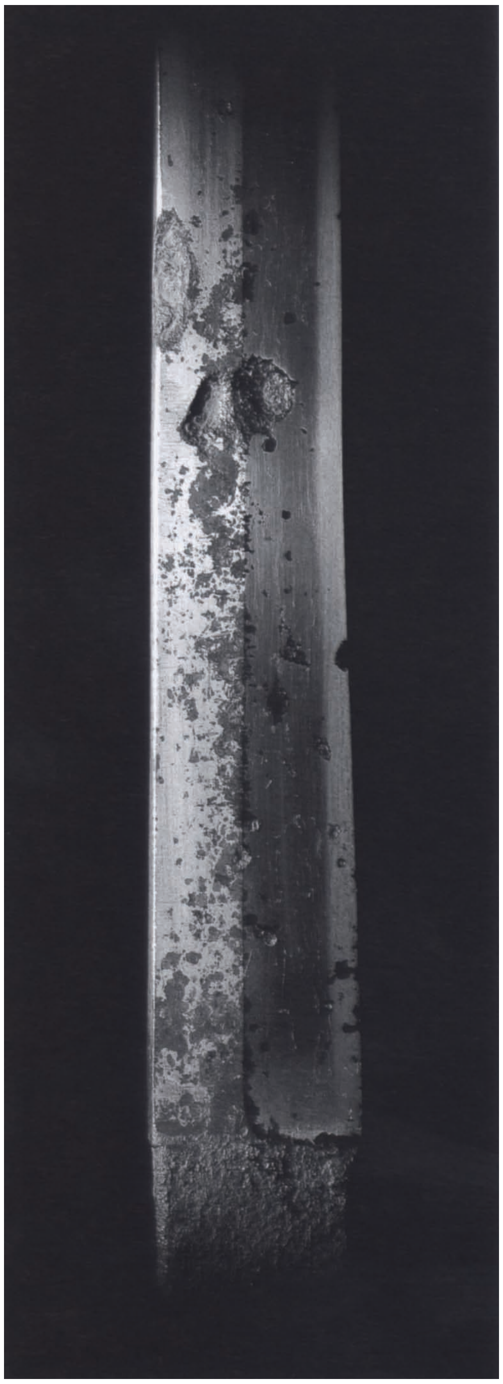
Kofun period, 7th century
Steel
L. 64.5 cm (25⅜ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

In the latter half of the Kofun period (6th–7th century), there was a gradual shift in Japanese swordmaking from *hira-zukuri chokutō* (see, e.g., cat. no. 50) of about 100 centimeters in length (including the tang) to somewhat shorter *kiriha-zukuri chokutō*: straight swords that have a ridge close to the cutting edge and parallel to it. This example, made of tempered steel, has an inscription inlaid in gold on the *omote* (obverse) near the *hamachi-moto*—the notch at the base of the cutting edge—but it is illegible.

The blade was excavated in Gunma Prefecture and is a rare example of a sword from the late Kofun period. It is a *kata-kiriha* type of *chokutō*—a blade ridged on one side but flat on the other—with a *kissaki* (point section) referred to as *kamasu*: literally the name of a fish (including types of pike), but here a reference to how the cutting edge of the point is straight rather than curved. The *mune* (back edge of the blade, opposite the cutting edge) is rounded and has a pattern of fine *ji-nie* (a dappled or misty area above the temper line). The *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) has occasional *kuichigai-ba* and *nijū-ba* (overlapping or doubled temper lines) and some small *midare-ba* (irregular patterns) on the reverse close to the *kissaki*. The tang is short and has two *mekugi-ana* (rivet holes), both of which have iron rivets rusted into them. Some of the iron fittings survive, including encircling bands and the *ashi-kanagu* (fixtures for suspending the sword at the belt), as does a fitting for the mouth of the scabbard in the form of a copper sleeve.

IT



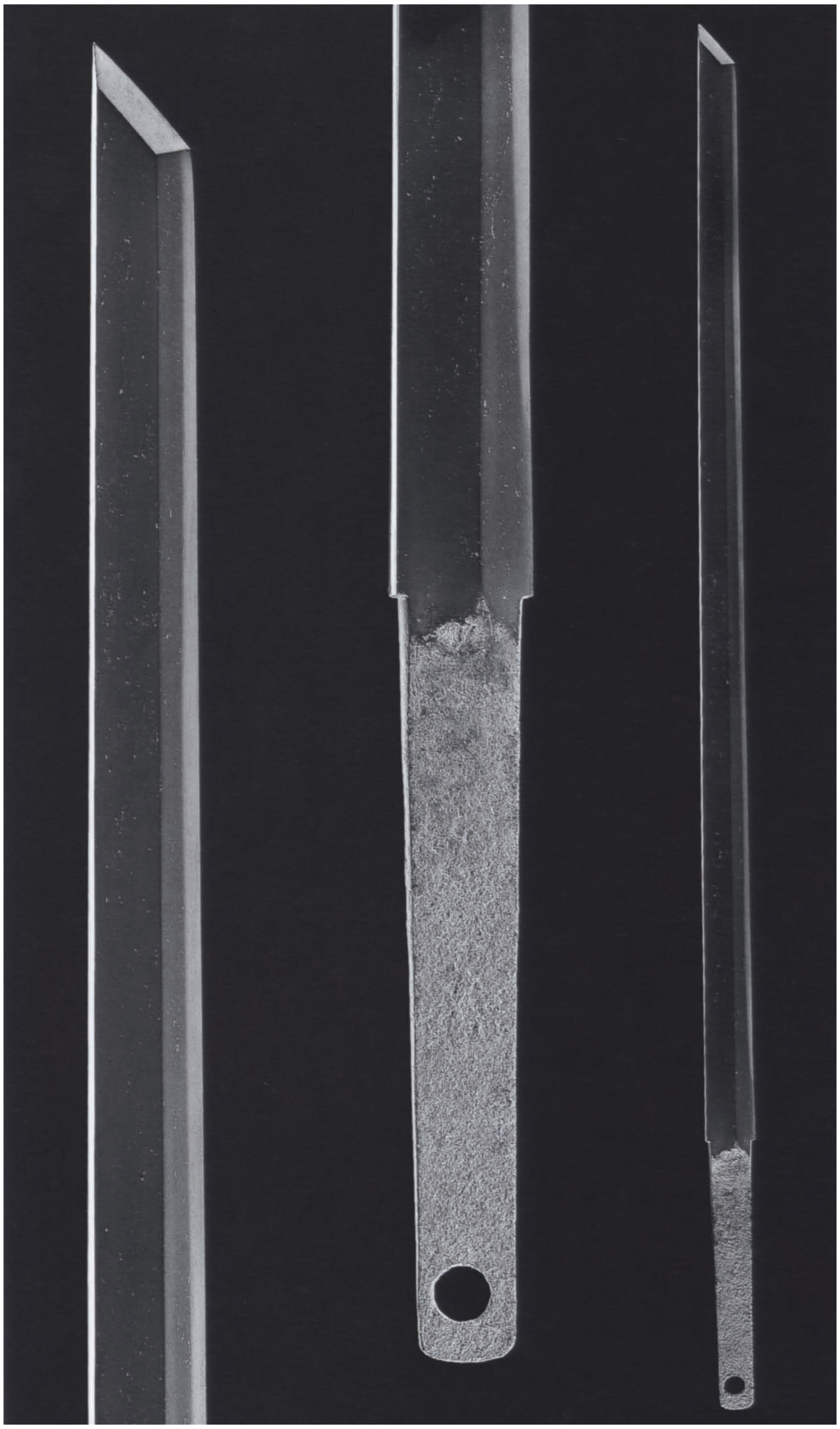


## 54.

## Blade for a *chokutō* (straight, single-edged sword), known as "Suiryūken" (Water Dragon Sword)

## 重要文化財 直刀 無銘 号：水龍剣

Nara period, 8th century
Steel
L. 62.1 cm (24½ in.); *uchi-zori* curvature
Unsigned
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**



Swords made of forged and quenched (or tempered) steel were used in Japan from about the fourth century on. Almost all extant Kofun-period examples have been excavated from tombs. They differ from the curved *tachi* of the Heian period and later in that they are either *chokutō* (single-edged, straight swords) or *ken* (double-edged swords). *Chokutō* continued to be employed until the middle of the tenth century. The only extant *chokutō* from the Asuka period (7th century) are two swords known as the "Heishi Shōrin Ken" and the "Shichi Sei Ken," both said to have been owned by Shōtoku Taishi (574–622), son of the Emperor Yōmei and regent for Empress Suiko. They are kept in the collection of the Shitennō-ji, Ōsaka, a Buddhist temple founded in 593. In comparison, there are forty-six Nara-period (8th century) *chokutō* preserved among the treasures of the Shōsō-in, Nara, the storehouse of the Tōdai-ji, another important ancient temple. The two *chokutō* in the Shitennō-ji are *kiriha-zukuri* in form—that is, they have a ridge near the cutting edge that runs parallel to it the length of the blade—and have an *uchi-zori* curve, in which the back edge is mostly straight but the cutting edge curves slightly toward the point. Among the Shōsō-in blades, in addition to those of the *kiriha-zukuri* type, are *hira-zukuri* swords (flat and ridgeless, an earlier shape) and some that are *moroha* (double edged) only at the *kissaki* (point section); these vary in length from 40 to 90 centimeters.

This *kiriha-zukuri chokutō*, originally housed in the Shōsō-in, was removed in 1872 by the Emperor Meiji, who took it to Tokyo to keep as his own. An outstanding work among the Shōsō-in blades, it has a forging of the finest *itame* mixed with *nagare-hada* (a "streamlike" steel surface pattern) and a *hoso suguha-hamon* (narrow, straight tempering line) that is characteristic of the Asuka and Nara periods. The mounting for the sword (cat. no. 135), made by Kanō Natsuō (1828–1898) in 1873, has water dragons inlaid on the metal fittings, hence the name by which the blade is known: "Suiryūken," or Water Dragon Sword. HK

## 55.

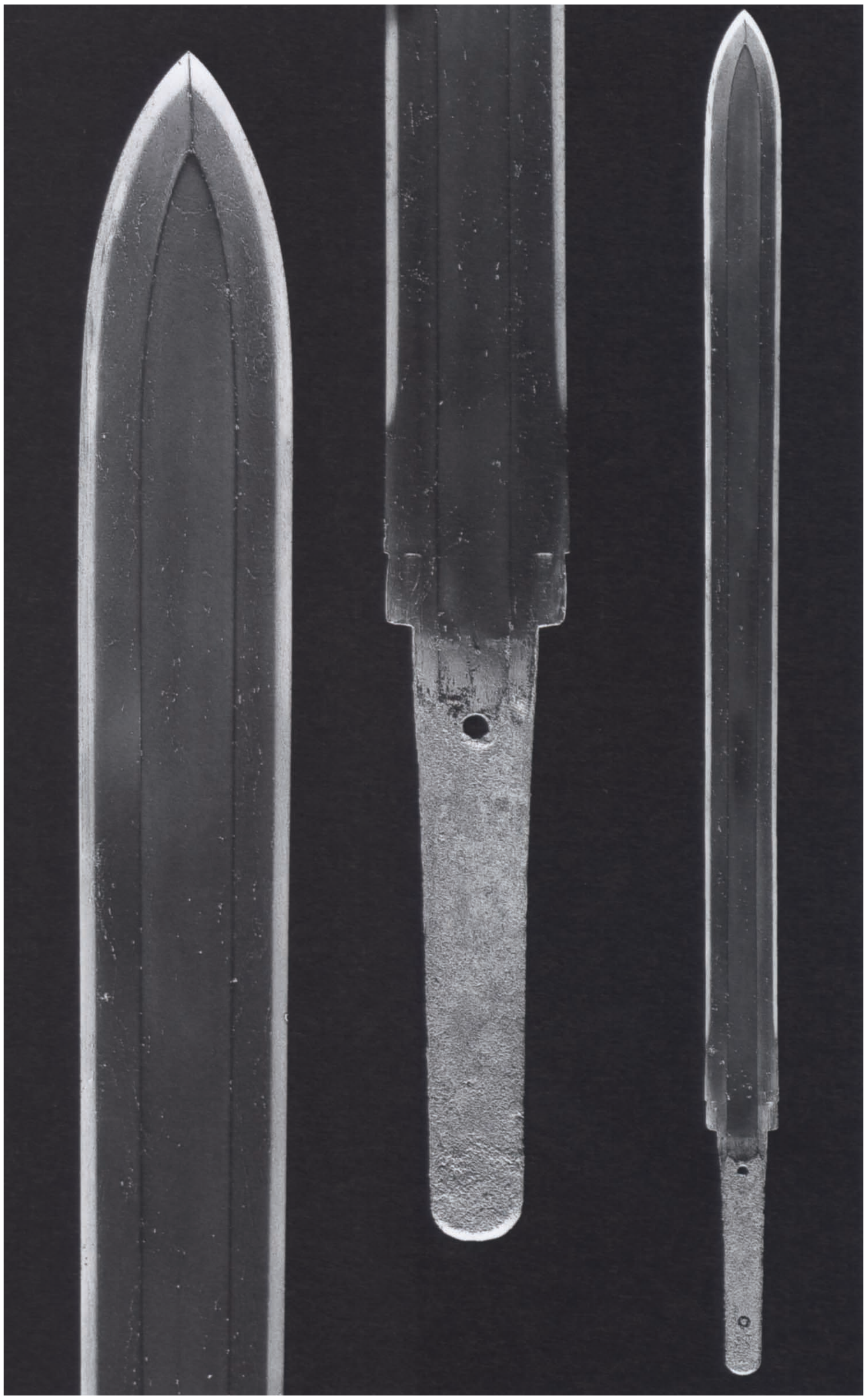
## Blade for a *ken* (straight, double-edged sword)

## 重要文化財 剣 無銘

Heian period, 10th century
Steel
L. 53.3 cm (21 in.)
Unsigned
Izusan-jinja Shrine, Shizuoka Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

Generally *ken* are rhomboid in section—a flattened diamond shape—but this piece is *kiriha-zukuri*, in which the ridge is close to the cutting edge and parallels it along the entire length, giving the center of the blade a broad, flat surface. An extremely rare shape for a *ken*, such pieces can be found only in the collections of three shrines: the Izusan-jinja, Shizuoka Prefecture, where this blade is preserved; the Kongō-ji, in Ōsaka; and the Butsunichi-an, in Kamakura. The sword in the Butsunichi-an dates to the late Heian period, but those in the Kongō-ji and Izusan-jinja are believed to be from the early Heian period and, thus, possibly derive some aspects of their shape from Nara-period (8th century) *chokutō*.

This blade embodies an ancient formal elegance, with a flowing *itame* (wood grain) forging pattern and a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) of *ko-nie* (relatively small visible crystals of steel). The *hamon* is also *yaki-otoshi*, meaning the pattern begins just above the *machi*, the notch on the cutting edge where the tang begins. Since the *machi* seen here comprises two "stages," the *ken* is believed to have originally been fitted with a three-pronged *vajra* hilt for use in esoteric Buddhist ceremonies. HK



Sanjō Munechika

## 56.
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)
## 重要文化財 太刀 三条

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Heian period, 11th century
Steel
L. 78.2 cm (30¾ in.); curvature 3 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of tang: 三条 SANJŌ
Nangu-taisha Shrine, Gifu Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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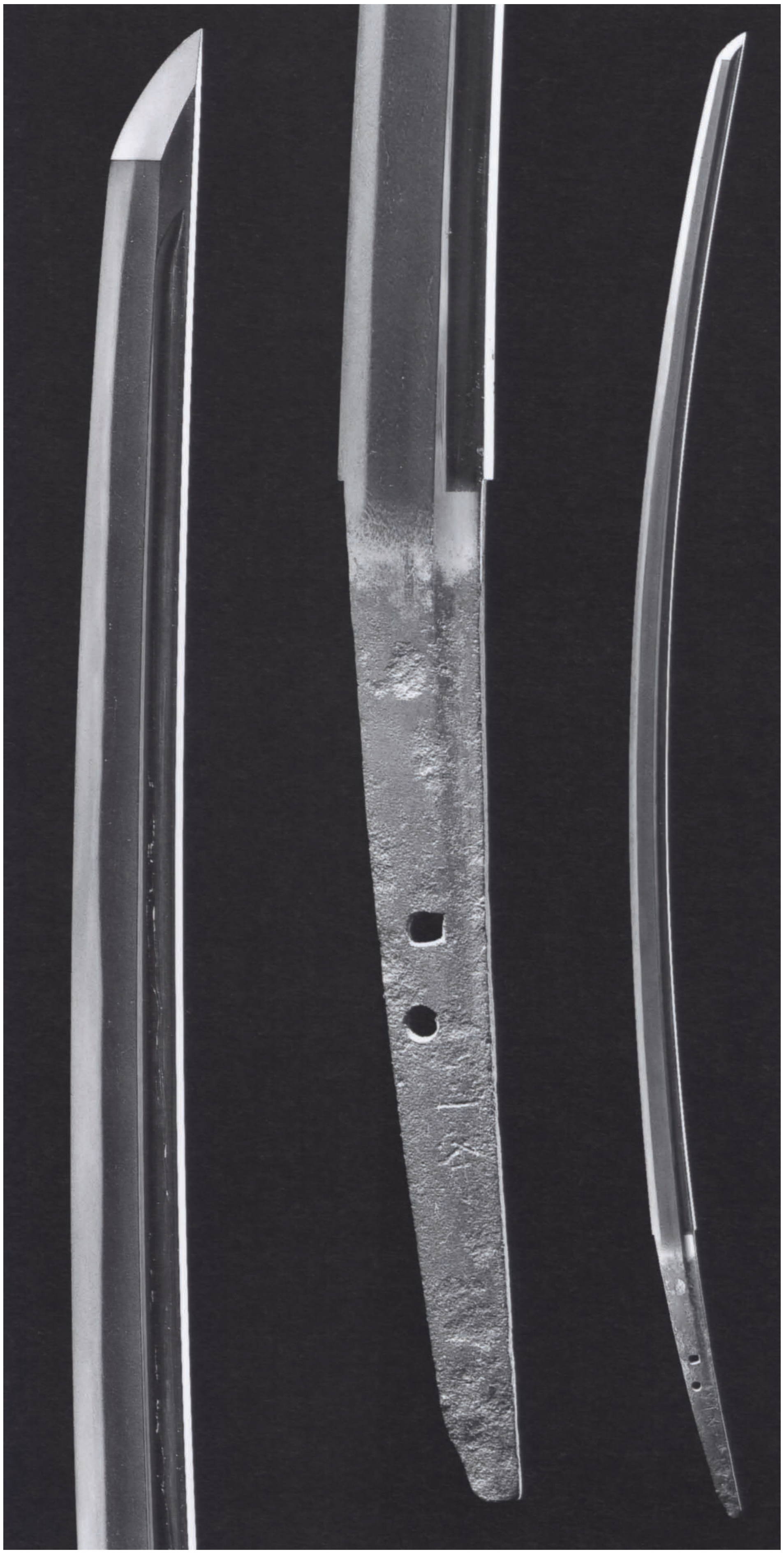
The shape of the Japanese sword is believed to have evolved from the straight to the curved blade sometime in the mid-Heian period, or about the tenth to early eleventh century. The first smiths to sign their names on curved swords were Hōki Yasutsuna (see cat. no. 57) and Sanjō Munechika, the maker of this blade. Munechika belonged to a group of swordsmiths that included Yoshiie and Chikamura, who lived in Sanjō, and Kanenaga and Kuninaga, of Gojō: all of them flourished during the Heian period.

There are very few extant works by Munechika, and only a few works inscribed "Sanjō" by the smiths who lived in that area of Kyōto. Representative of Sanjō swords is the famous blade known as "Mikazuki Munechika" (Crescent-moon Munechika), a slender, deeply curved blade with a small *kissaki* (point section). That blade has a *hamon* (tempering pattern) characteristic of Munechika's style, including *ko-midare* (compact irregular patterns) with a form of *tobi-yaki* mixed with *uchi-noke*: separate areas of bright steel, said to resemble ocean spray, and fine, irregular curving lines. Compared to the "Mikazuki Munechika," this sword, which descended in the Satake family, appears to be more technically accomplished. Although possibly made at a different time than the "Mikazuki Munechika," it nonetheless clearly embodies the ancient elegance of the Sanjō group. HK



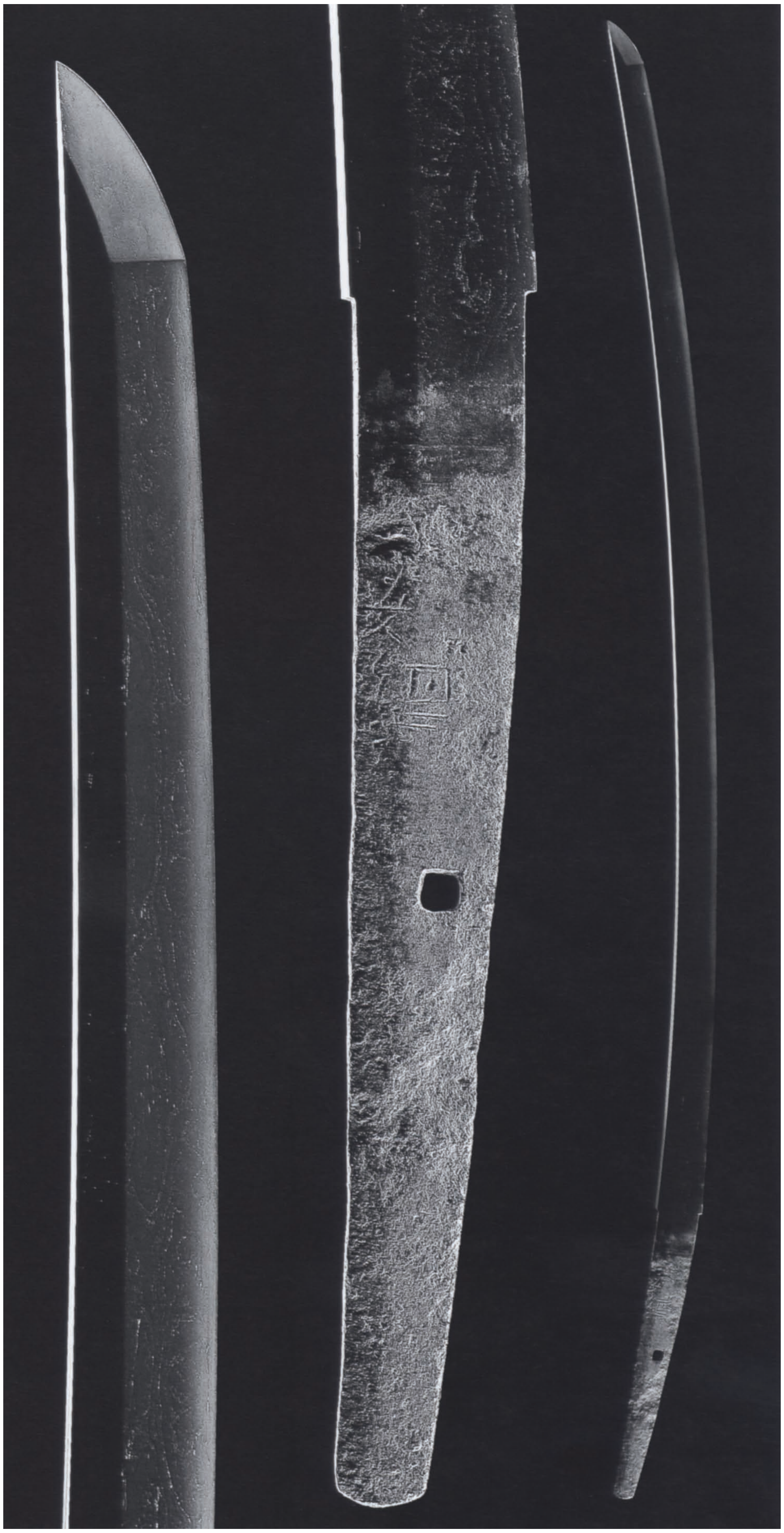
Hōki Yasutsuna

## 57.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 重要美術品 太刀 安綱

Heian period, 11th century
Steel
L. 76.1 cm (30 in.); curvature 2.5 cm (1 in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 安綱 YASUTSUNA
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Art Object**



The deeply curved, single-edged *tachi*—the type of Japanese sword familiar to us now—appeared sometime in the eleventh century. About the same time, swordsmiths began chiseling their names on the tangs of their blades. The earliest to do so were Munechika of Kyōto (see cat. no. 56) and Yasutsuna, the maker of this *tachi*.

Yasutsuna was a smith of Hōki province (present-day Tottori Prefecture). According to some of the early books on swords, he was active at the beginning of the ninth century. The curved sword had not yet been introduced at that time, however, and today it is surmised that he was active about the beginning of the eleventh century, at the same time as Munechika. His style, as seen in this example, is typified by a long blade with a deep curvature, *ō-itame* forging (large wood grain), and a *hamon* (tempering pattern) known as *ko-midare* (small, irregular patterns), a rarely seen, relatively simple form. Another sword by Yasutsuna, named "Dōji-giri"—according to legend, the blade with which Minamoto no Raiko (Yorimitsu) subjugated the monster Shūten Dōji, which haunted Mount Oeyama—is considered one of the finest Japanese swords. This *tachi* is similar to that blade in many ways and is likewise a piece of superior workmanship. HK

Yasuie

**58.**

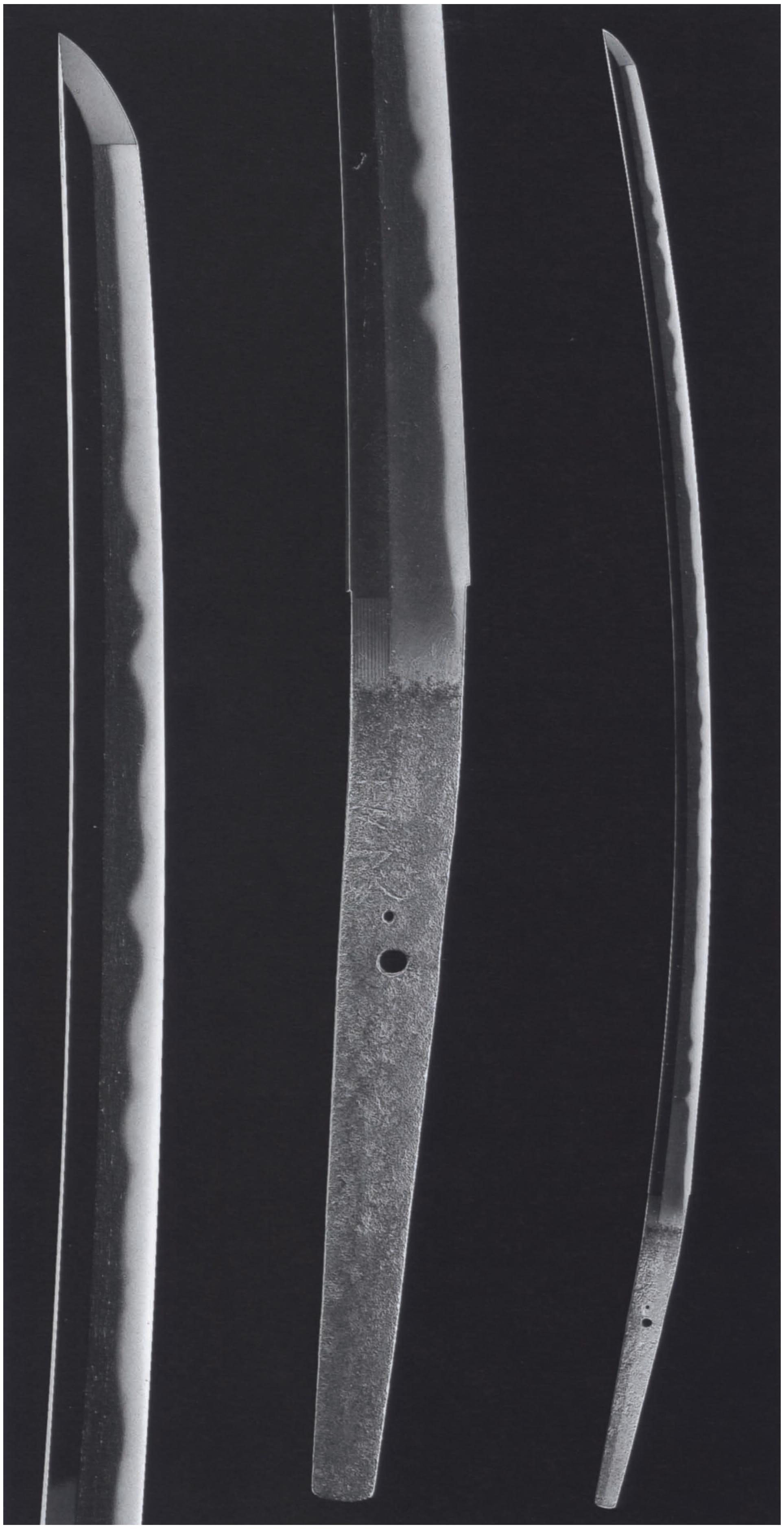
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

国宝 太刀 安家

Heian period, 11th–12th century
Steel
L. 77.2 cm (30⅜ in.); curvature 3 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 安家 YASUIE
Kyoto National Museum
**National Treasure**

Yasuie was one of the smiths of Hōki province (in present-day Tottori Prefecture), among whom Yasutsuna, renowned as the maker of the famous blade known as "Dōji-giri," is considered representative (see cat. no. 57). Yasuie is believed to have worked somewhat later than Yasutsuna, in about the eleventh century, and very few of his works survive. This example, a masterpiece among Yasuie's signed blades, is a beautifully shaped, slender *tachi* with a deep *koshi-zori* curve, in which the center of the curvature is closer to the tang than to the point. The forging is *itame* (wood grain) mixed with flowing *ō-itame*, or "large" wood grain; the *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *ko-midare* mixed with *chōji* (small, irregular patterns mixed with clove shapes) is particularly flamboyant in the upper part of the blade. The character *yasu* in the signature is small, while the character *ie* is large, similar to the large "*tsuna*" in the signature of Yasutsuna and characteristic of the smiths of Hōki during the Heian period. The sword was passed down in the Kuroda family of Chikuzen province (present-day Fukuoka Prefecture).

IT



Masatsune

## 59.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

国宝 太刀 正恒

---

Heian period, 12th century
Steel
L. 74.2 cm (29¼ in.); curvature 2.1 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 正恒 MASATSUNE
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**National Treasure**

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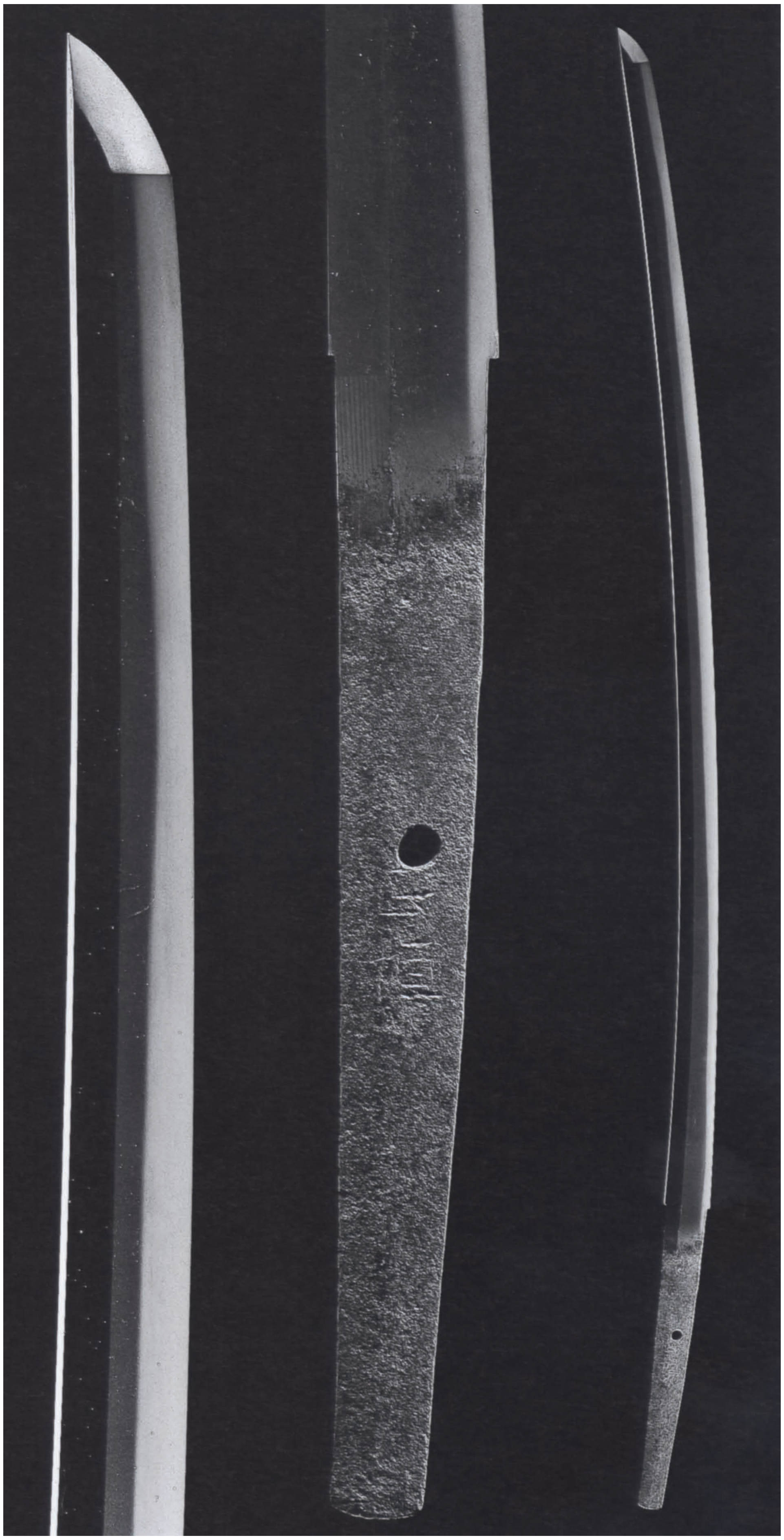
This sword has a small *kissaki* (point section) and a shallow curvature, but it nonetheless exhibits much of the elegant shape of a *tachi* from the late Heian period (ca. 11th–12th century). Originally it would have had a curvature of about 2.7 centimeters; this was later reduced, probably sometime after the sixteenth century, in order to fit the blade into an *uchigatana* mounting, creating the more shallow form seen now. The *hamon* (tempering pattern) is *suguha* (straight) with variations, and the *ji* and *ha*—the flat, unsharp surface of the blade and the cutting edge, respectively—are both bright, reflecting the superior skills and technical facility of the great *Ko*-Bizen smith Masatsune.

Masatsune is considered a representative smith of the *Ko*-Bizen ("Old" Bizen) school from the late Heian through the early Kamakura period, and a relatively large number of swords signed "Masatsune" survive from that time. There are small variations, however, in the styles and signatures of some of those blades, leading scholars to speculate that there were a number of *Ko*-Bizen smiths who used that name. This famous sword was passed down by the Hosokawa family of Higo province (present-day Kumamoto Prefecture). IT



Kanehira

**60.**

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword), known as "Ō-Kanehira" (Great Kanehira)

国宝 太刀 名物 大包平

---

Heian period, 12th century
Steel
L. 89.2 cm (35⅛ in.); curvature 3.5 cm (1⅜ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 備前国包平作
*BIZEN KUNI KANEHIRA SAKU*
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**

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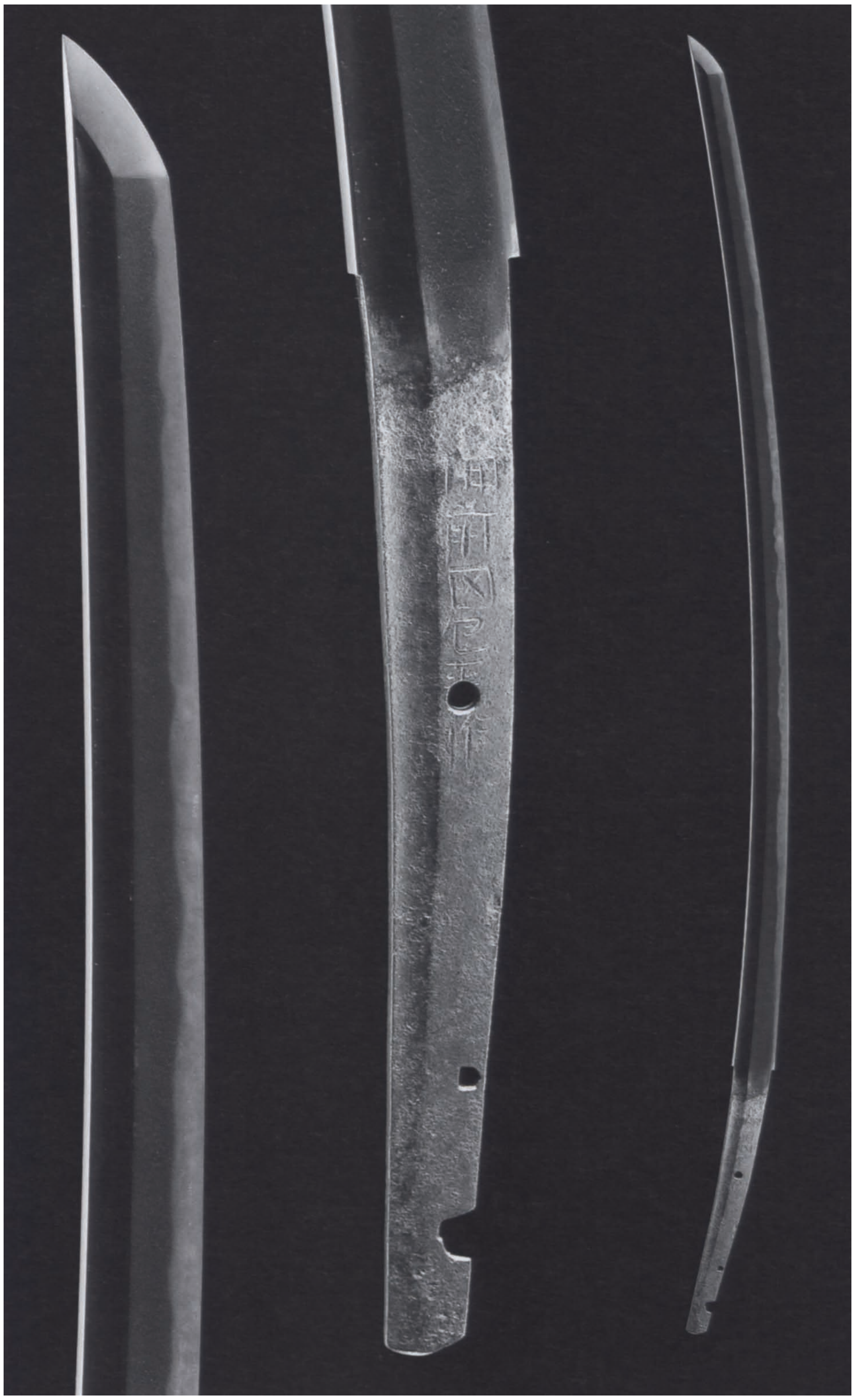

Kanehira was one of the smiths of the *Ko*-Bizen ("Old" Bizen) school, the oldest in the province of Bizen and, from the Heian through the Muromachi period, the most productive site of swordmaking in Japan. Since ancient times he has been numbered as one of the *Ko*-Bizen *San Hira* (the three "hira" of the *Ko*-Bizen school)—a reference to the names of the smiths Kanehira, Sukehira, and Takahira.

This blade by Kanehira is different from most *tachi* of the Heian period, which generally tend to be long and deeply curved: about 75 to 78 centimeters long, with a curvature of 3 centimeters and with a considerable difference in width between the *moto* and *saki*, or the bottom and top of the cutting edge, respectively. By comparison, this sword is some three *shaku* (90 cm) long, is very wide, and has an *ikubi-gissaki*: a short point section in relation to the length of the blade, often compared to the proportions of a boar's head to its body, hence the literal meaning "boar's-head point." The *itame* (wood grain) forging has a strong *jigane* (surface texture) with *chikei* (bright, short curving lines). The *hamon* (tempering pattern) has *ko-midare* (small, irregular patterns) mixed with *gunome* (compact, regular waves). It also includes *ashi* (notches) and many *nie* (visible steel crystals) and is rich in variations within the *ha* (cutting edge section).

There are many extant *Ko*-Bizen swords, but none of this length, even among Kanehira's other splendid works. The workmanship is likewise outstanding among *Ko*-Bizen blades. It was recorded with the name "Ō-Kanehira" (Great Kanehira) in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordsmiths published in the early eighteenth century, and is highly esteemed as *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece." Indeed the blade is regarded as the greatest of all Japanese swords. It was a treasured possession of Ikeda Terumasa, lord of Okayama Castle, and was long the most important sword in his family's collection. HK

Nobufusa

## 61.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝　太刀　信房作

---

Heian period, 12th century
Steel
L. 80 cm (31½ in.); curvature 2.7 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 信房作
*NOBUFUSA SAKU*
Chido Museum, Yamagata Prefecture
**National Treasure**

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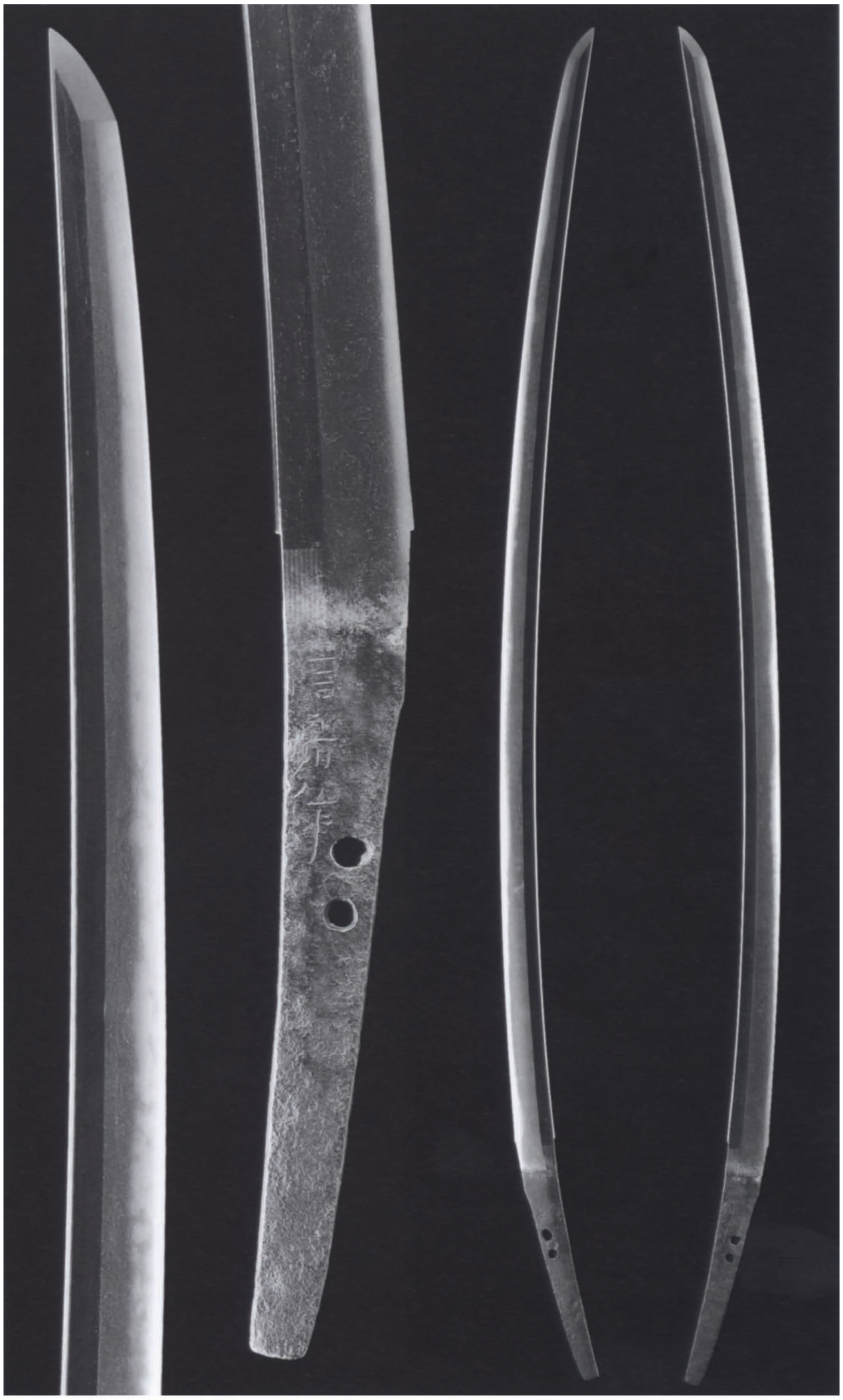
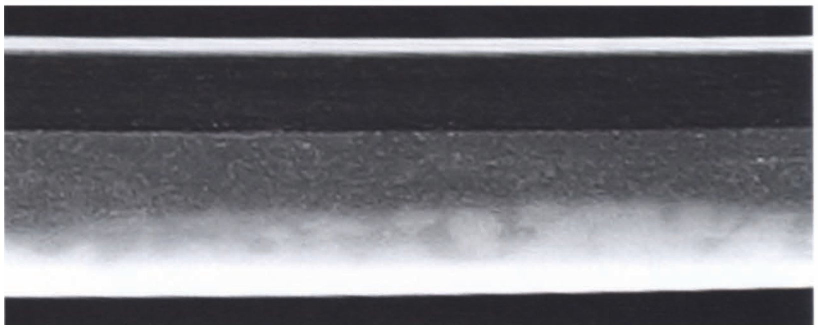
This slender, deeply curved *tachi* signed by the swordsmith Nobufusa has the elegant shape and other traits typical of Heian-period blades. There were smiths named "Nobufusa" in both the *Ko*-Bizen and Ichimonji schools; this sword, judging by its shape and the refined *ko-midare hamon* (tempering pattern with compact, irregular shapes), is believed to be by the *Ko*-Bizen Nobufusa. Not only is it an excellent example of his work, the sword is an outstanding piece among all *Ko*-Bizen blades.

The sword is said to have been given by Tokugawa Ieyasu to Sakai Tadatsugu, one of his "Four Trusted Retainers," known as the Shi-Tennō. The circumstances in which it was given are unknown, however. It was passed down in the Tsuruoka Sakai house. Its *ito maki no tachi* mounting (cat. no. 121)—which has hollyhock *mon* (insignia) on a *nashiji* ground (a type of gold-flecked laquer said to resemble "pearskin"), typical of mountings carried by samurai for ceremonial purposes—is a particularly early example of the type.

HK





### 62.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword) with chrysanthemum *mon* (insignia)

## 重要文化財 太刀 菊紋（菊御作）

---

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 78.1 cm (30¾ in.); curvature 2.2 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 菊紋（菊御作）
[chrysanthemum *mon*] (made by the emperor)
Kyoto National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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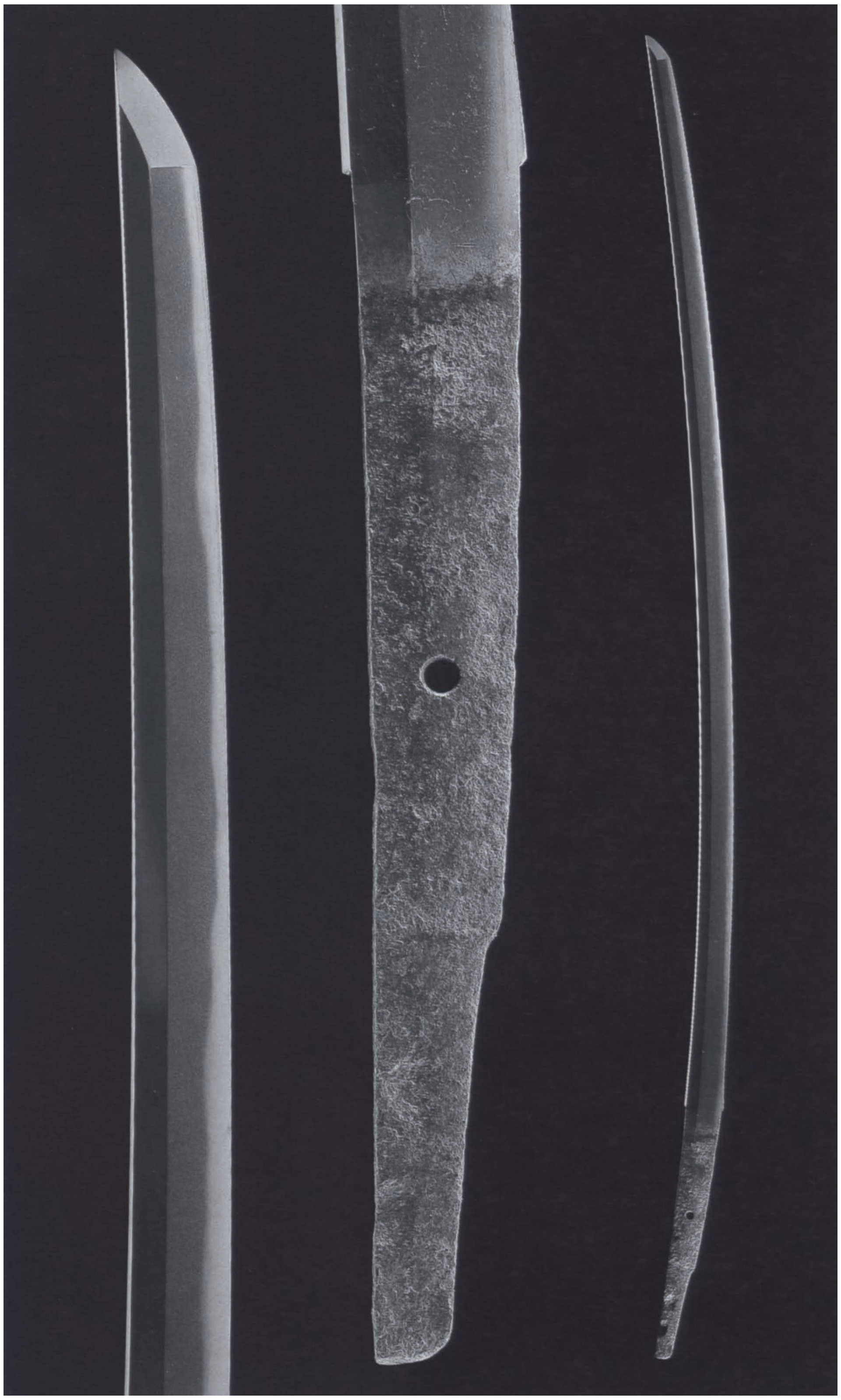


This sword is said to have been tempered by the Emperor Go-Toba (r. 1184–98), often referred to as a "retired" emperor because he abdicated at age eighteen in favor of his sons but continued to wield power. (He is thus sometimes called Go-Toba Jōkō, "Jōkō" being the rank of a retired emporer.) In the third year of the Jōkyū era (1221) Go-Toba was exiled to the island of Okinoshima after a failed attempt at overthrowing the Kamakura *bakufu*, led by Hōjō Yoshitoki. The famously multitalented Go-Toba excelled as a *waka* poet and ordered the compilation of the *Shin Kokin-shū*, an anthology of *waka* poetry. Go-Toba is also renowned for having summoned swordsmiths to his palace (in monthly rotations) and having them forge swords for him. He would then undertake the quenching process (*yaki-ire*) himself and inscribe the tang of the blades with the chrysanthemum *mon* as his signature (or *kiku gosaku*, "made by the emperor"). Such blades are known as *gosho yaki* ("sword tempered at the palace") since they were inscribed with the imperial chrysanthemum *mon*.

This *tachi*, elegantly shaped and slender, has a deep *koshi-zori* curve, in which the center of the curvature is closer to the tang than to the point. On the obverse (*omote*)—meaning the side of the blade that faced out when the sword was worn—is the sixteen-petal chrysanthemum *mon* in *kebori* (line engraving), just below the *habaki* (area at the top of the tang). The blade has well-packed *ko-itame* (tight wood grain) forging texture and a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) with *ko-midare* (small, irregular patterns) interspersed with *ko-chōji* (small clove shapes) that are somewhat pointed (*togari*) and have crests of *nie* (visible crystals of steel). Altogether, it is reminiscent of the work of Norimune, one of the *Go Ban Kaji*, the "attendant smiths" who made swords for Emperor Go-Toba. Norimune was active during the early Kamakura period and was the founder the *Ko*-Ichimonji school of swordsmiths. IT

## 63.

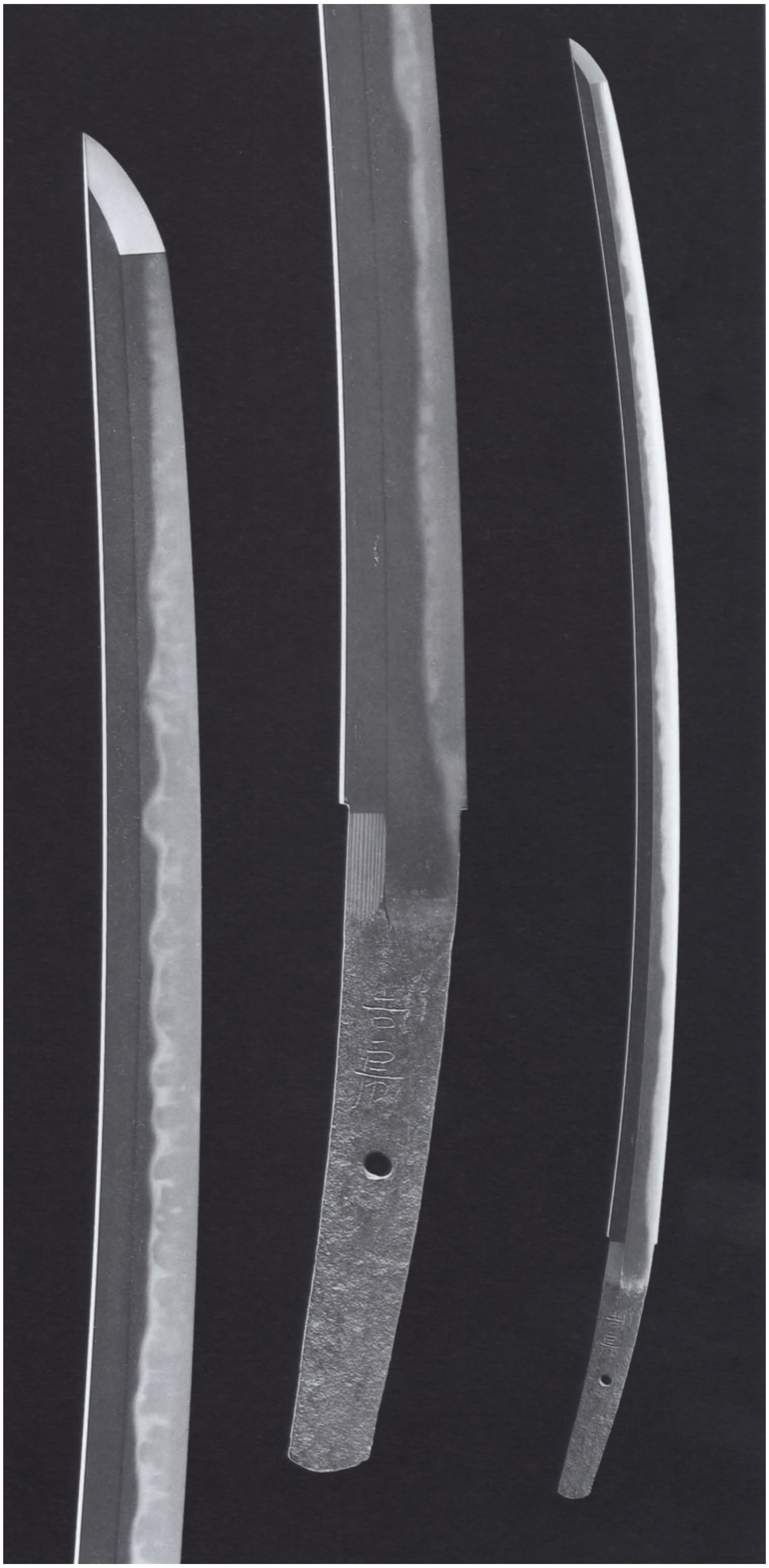
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 吉房

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 71.2 cm (28 in.); curvature 2.7 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 吉房 YOSHIFUSA
Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama Prefecture
**National Treasure**

Yoshifusa, a smith of the Fukuoka Ichimonji school, made swords with an exceptionally flowery *chōji-midare hamon*—a tempering line of clove-shaped waves—resembling the blades of Sukezane and Norifusa. There are, however, many more surviving blades by Yoshifusa than by either of those smiths. Judging from differences in the size and style of his signature, it has been theorized either that there were several generations of smiths with that name or that the same smith's signature changed over the years.

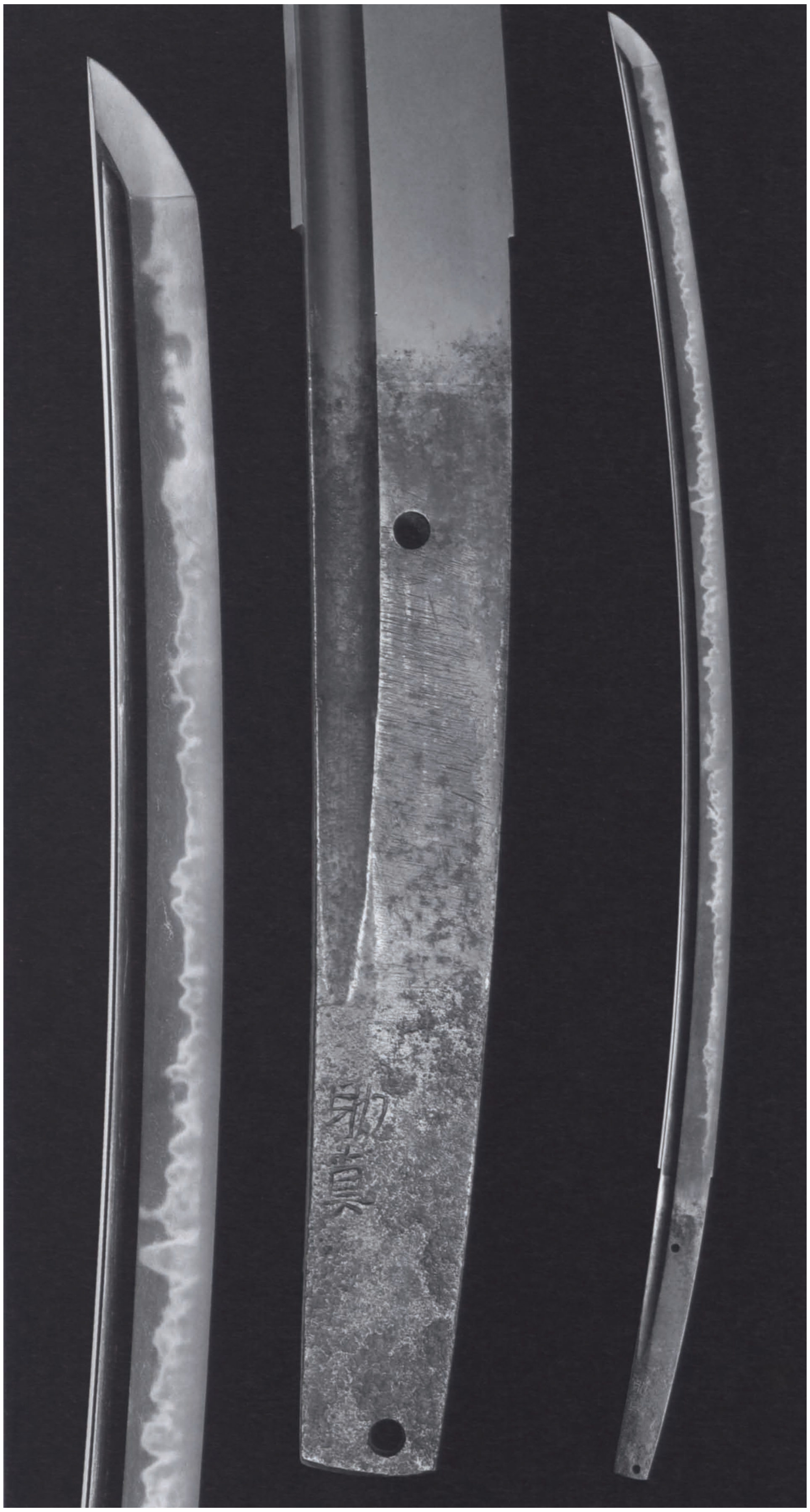
This *tachi* is rather slender for a sword by Yoshifusa, but it is *ubu*—that is, the cutting edge retains its original length (the tang, however, was slightly shortened)—making for a beautiful overall shape. The lively array of *chōji* (clove shapes) in the *hamon* (tempering pattern) is called *juka-chōji*, or "multilayered *chōji*." There are also numerous *ashi* and *yō* (notches and isolated spots) in the *hamon* leading toward the cutting edge in delicate *ko-nie* (a loose pattern of small, visible crystals of steel), characteristic of Yoshifusa's work. HK



Sukezane

## 64.
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)
## 国宝 太刀 助真

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 71.2 cm (28 in.); curvature 2.9 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 助真 *SUKEZANE*
Nikkō Tōshōgū Shrine, Tochigi Prefecture
**National Treasure**



Many of the swords made by the first groups of smiths active in Bizen province (present-day Okayama Prefecture) from the late Heian to the early Kamakura period are somewhat restrained in appearance, with a basic *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) incorporating *ko-midare* and *ko-chōji* (compact patterns and clove shapes). Makers of such blades include the Ichimonji group in Fukuoka, which was founded by Norimune and continued by Sukemune and Narimune. About the middle of the Kamakura period, the *chōji-midare hamon* appeared, with comparatively larger clove shapes and waves. One of the smiths who employed it was Sukezane, the maker of this blade. The smith Yoshifusa of the Fukuoka Ichimonji school (see cat. no. 63) produced blades with similarly extravagant *chōji* about the same time. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Sukezane's work is that all of his *chōji* shapes are large. There is also a strong presence of *nie* in the *hamon*: visible crystals of steel resembling crushed ice.

According to the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi*—the oldest book on Japanese swords, published in 1423 (cat. no. 211)—Sukezane was summoned to make swords in Kamakura by the Hōjō family, who had assumed power within the *bakufu* (military government). Many of the extant swords from that time are wide and grandly proportioned overall, with an *ikubi-gissaki* ("boar's-neck" point section). This *tachi* is a particularly powerful example of that style. It was once in the possession of Katō Kiyomasa, a retainer of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and was given to Tokugawa Ieyasu, who commissioned a black-lacquered *uchigatana* mounting for it for his own use. Ieyasu is known to have cherished the sword and wore it frequently. After his death, it was housed in the Nikkō Tōshōgū, where Ieyasu is enshrined.

HK

Kunimune

## 65.

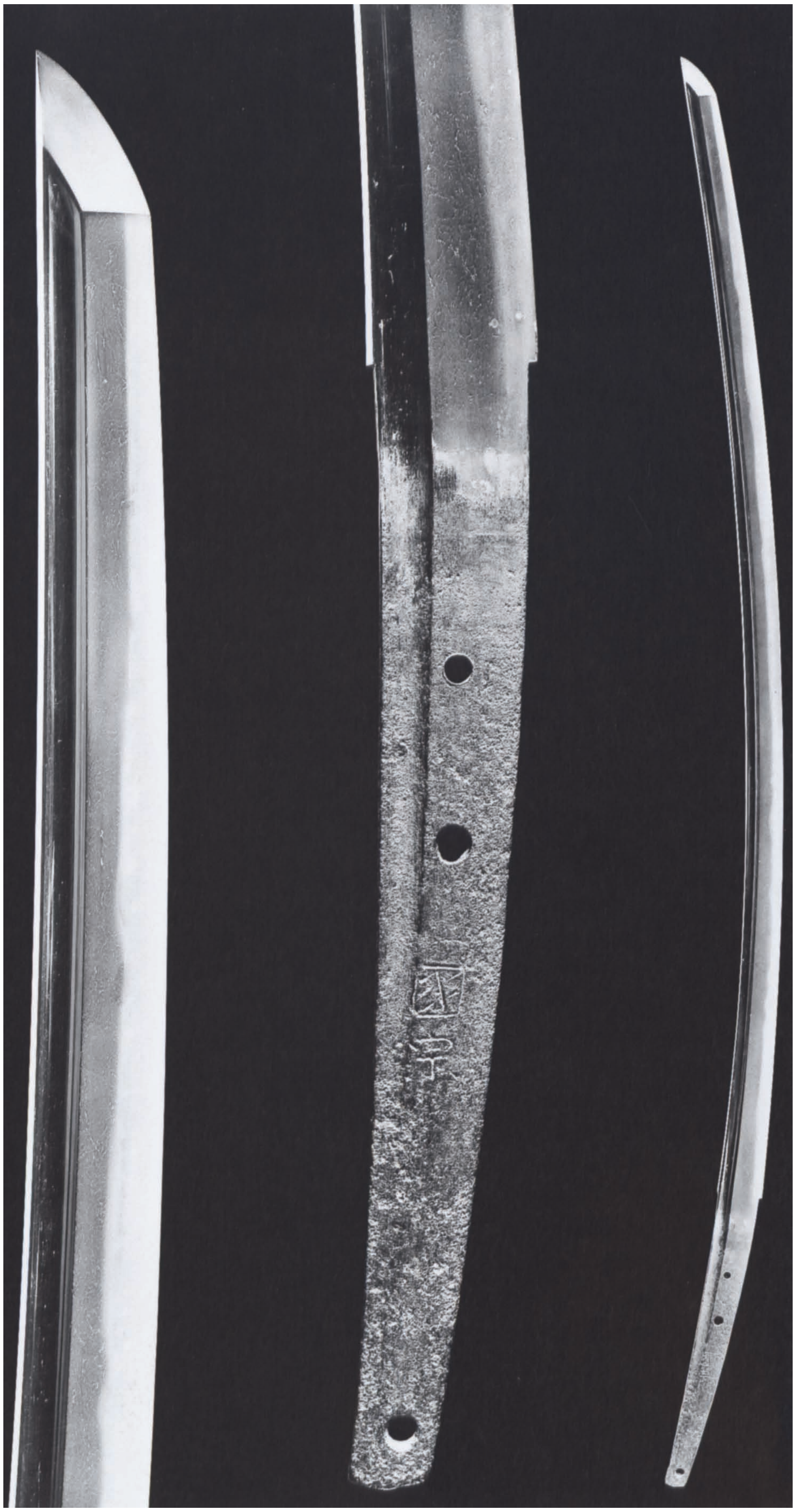
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 国宗

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 81.8 cm (32¼ in.); curvature 3.2 cm (1¼ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 国宗 *KUNIMUNE*
Nikkō Tōshōgū Shrine, Tochigi Prefecture
**National Treasure**

The forging of this wide, deeply curved *tachi* of towering proportions is *itame* (wood grain), and the blade has *utsuri*—a reflective, "misty" band that parallels the *hamon* (tempering pattern) along the edge—characteristic of Bizen swords. The *hamon* itself is *gunome* mixed with *chōji* (compact waves or zigzags mixed with clove shapes) and overall is in the *saka* style, in which the elements of the pattern "slope" toward the tang, including many *ashi* and *yō* (notch shapes and isolated spots). The blade is by Kunimune, some of whose extant works are signed with the characters for "Osafune (no) jū" (resident in Osafune), meaning that he was a smith from that town. His style differs from that of Nagamitsu, a smith of the main Osafune school who worked at the same time, making it apparent that Kunimune was of a different lineage.

An extant *tachi* dated 1313 is said to be the work of the second-generation Kunimune. That blade has a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) with a tightly textured *nioi-guchi* (the area between the tempering pattern and the flat surface of the blade) whereas the present example by the first generation has elegant *itame* (wood grain) forging. The sloping *chōji-midare hamon* (tempering with clove shapes and irregular patterns) is unusual among blades by the first-generation Kunimune, which typically have a more extravagant pattern of *ō-chōji* (large clove shapes) mixed with *kawazu-ko* ("tadpole"-shaped) *chōji*. It was given to Tokugawa Ieyasu by Ikeda Terumasa and was deposited in the Nikkō Tōshōgū after Ieyasu's death. HK



Hisakuni

## 66.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 久国

---

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 80.4 cm (31⅝ in.); curvature 3 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 久国（花押）
HISAKUNI (*kaō*)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**National Treasure**

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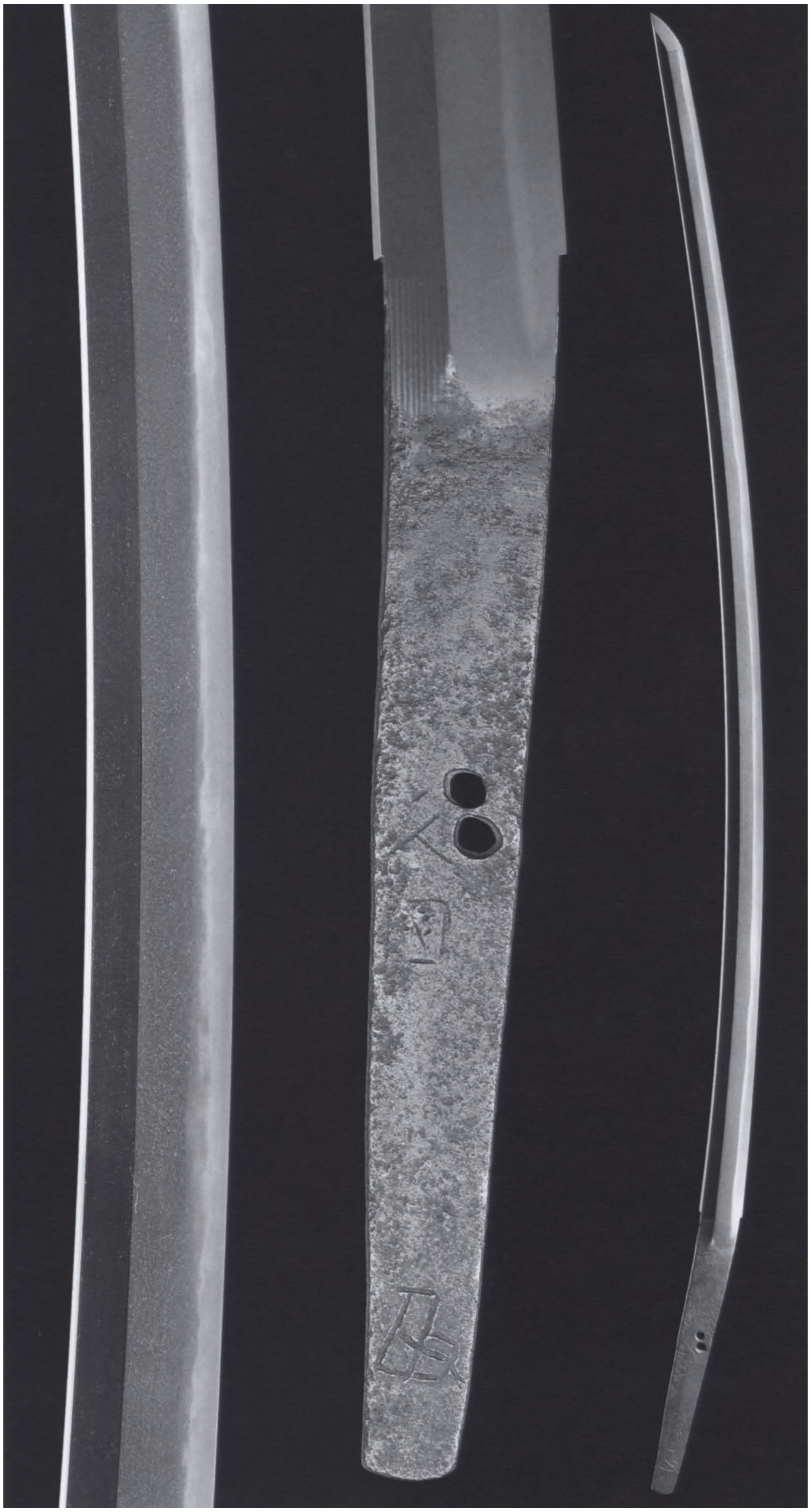
This elegantly shaped *tachi* is *shinogi-zukuri* in form—that is, it has a longitudinal ridge as well as a transverse ridge at the point—the most common shape for the Japanese sword. It also has a deep *koshi-zori* curve, in which the center of the curvature is closer to the tang than to the point, and there is a substantial difference in width between the *moto* (base) and *saki* (top). The forging is refined, and the *hamon* (tempering pattern), although predominantly *suguha* (straight), has *ko-midare* (compact irregular patterns) rich in delicate variations. A superb work, the sword is characteristic of the Awataguchi school.

The maker, Hisakuni, was one of six brothers (the eldest, Kunitomo, followed by Hisakuni himself, Kuniyasu, Kunikiyo, Arikuni, and Kunitsuna), all of whom were swordsmiths of the Awataguchi school, which succeeded the Sanjō school in Kyōto and flourished from the early to late Kamakura period. Together with Kunitomo and Kuniyasu, Hisakuni was one of the *Go Ban Kaji* (attendant smiths) of the retired Emperor Go-Toba (see cat. no. 62). This sword was given to Yorinobu, the first lord of Kishu province (in present-day Wakayama Prefecture), as a bequest of Tokugawa Ieyasu in the early Edo period. It later passed to a branch of the Tokugawa clan, the Matsudaira family of Saijō, in Iyo province (present-day Ehime Prefecture). IT



Norikuni

## 67.

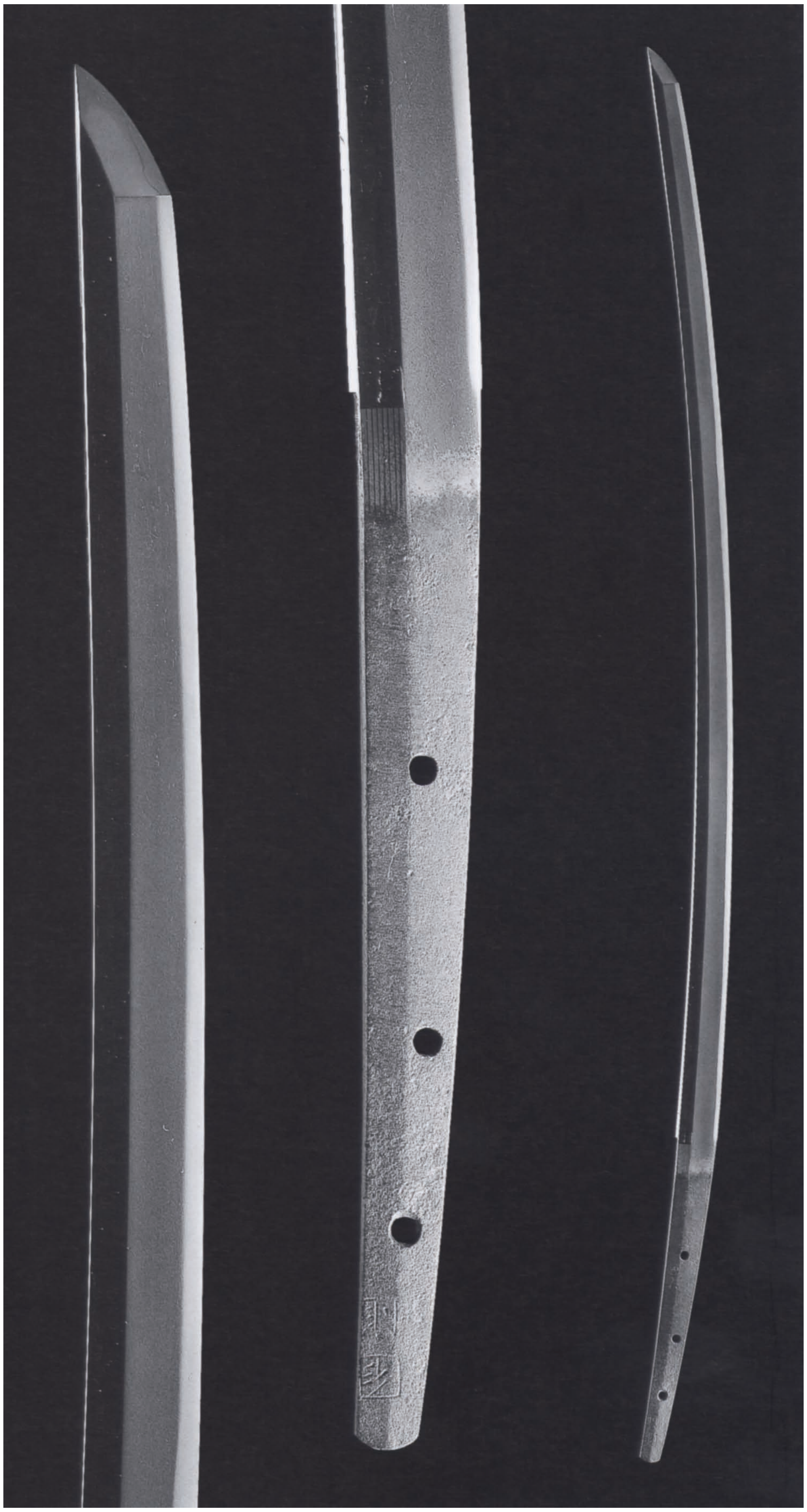
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 則国

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 74.7 cm (29⅜ in.); curvature 2.3 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 則国 NORIKUNI
Kyoto National Museum
**National Treasure**

Norikuni is thought to have been the son of Kunitomo, who established the studio of smiths at Awataguchi, in Kyōto, about the thirteenth century. He is held to be the father of several famous smiths of the Awataguchi school, including Kuniyoshi, Kunimitsu, and Yoshimitsu, and he was also one of the *Go Ban Kaji*, the "attendant smiths" of the retired Emperor Go-Toba (see cat. no. 62). There are few extant examples of his work.

This signed piece by Norikuni is a slender *tachi* with a small *kissaki* (point section). Although the tang has been greatly shortened, the curve remains a deep *koshi-zori*, in which the center of the curvature is closer to the tang than to the point, and the original, beautiful shape can still be discerned. It is a superior piece among swords by Norikuni, exemplifying the characteristics of the Awataguchi school, with its exquisite steel surface texture of *ko-itame* (tight wood grain) and a narrow *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) rich in variations of *ko-midare* in *ko-nie* (small, irregular patterns amid visible crystals of steel). The smith's two-character signature, "Norikuni," is chiseled into the end of the tang close to the *mune* (the back edge) on the *shinogi-ji* (ridge line), in the same manner as many other *tachi* by the Awataguchi school. The sword was passed down in the Ikeda family of Inshu province (present-day Tottori Prefecture). IT



Yoshimitsu

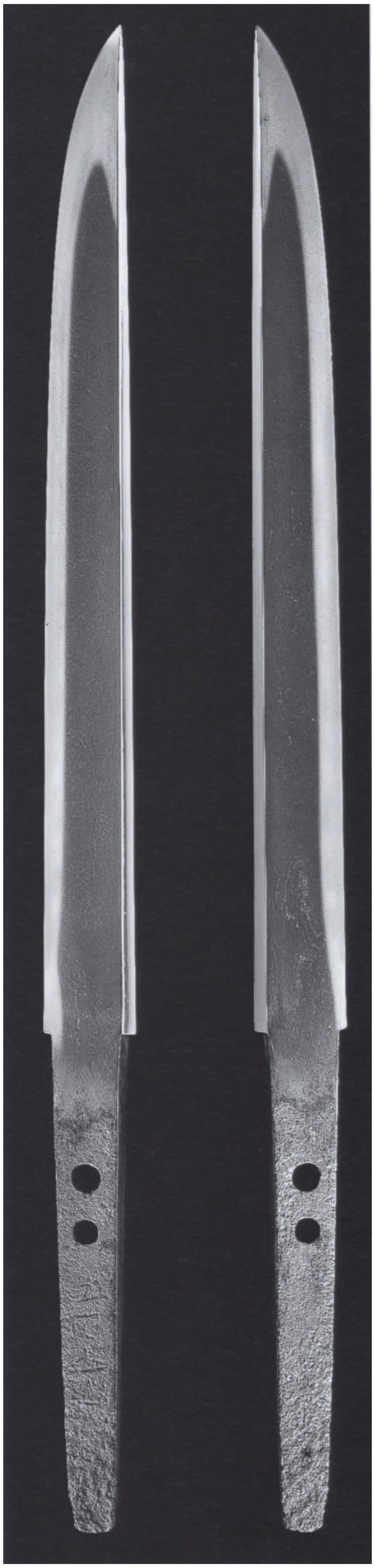
## 68.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger), known as "Atsu Toshiro (Atsushi)"

## 国宝 短刀 名物 厚藤四郎

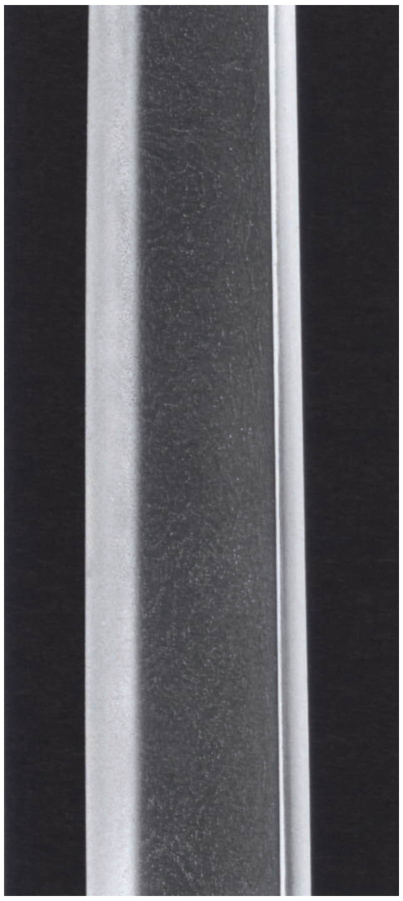
Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 21.8 cm (8⅝ in.); no curvature
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 吉光 *YOSHIMITSU*
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**

The Awataguchi school, which flourished in Kyōto in the Kamakura period, was founded by six brothers: the eldest, Kunitomo, followed by Hisakuni (see cat. no. 66), Kuniyasu, Kunikiyo, Arikuni, and Kunitsuna. They were succeeded by Kunitomo's son Norikuni; Kuniyoshi (see cat. no. 69) and Kunimitsu; and Yoshimitsu, a pupil of Kuniyoshi: all great smiths. Kunitomo, Hisakuni, and Kuniyasu are renowned as the *Go Ban Kaji*, the "attendant smiths" of the retired Emperor Go-Toba (see cat. no. 62). Hisakuni was a noted master of fine *itame* (forging grain). Kunitsuna made the famous sword named "Oni Maru" (The Demon), which was worn by Hōjō Tokiyori, the fifth *shikken* (regent) of the Kamakura *bakufu*, who governed on behalf of the shogun.



Yoshimitsu's works are the most plentiful of all the smiths of the Awataguchi school. The known blades by him are all *tantō* (daggers) except for a single *tachi* that was once owned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and is known as "Ichigo Hitofuri" (One in a Lifetime). (It was later cut down to the size of a *katana*.) The present example is the shortest of Yoshimitsu's *tantō*, but it has considerable *kasane* (thickness), and the blade is of a type commonly called a *yoroidoshi* (armor-piercer). In terms of sheer beauty, this is quite possibly the greatest of all of the blades by Yoshimitsu. It is highly esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece." The forging is *itame* (wood grain); the *ji-nie* is particularly strong (meaning the presence of visible crystals of steel in the flat section of the blade); and the *hamon* (tempering pattern) is *suguha* (straight), a speciality of Yoshimitsu's. The *hamon* is rather wide, with some prominent *gunome* (irregular waves), many *nie* (visible crystals of steel), and deep *nioi*: a crystalline structure in which the crystals are not visible to the naked eye, sometimes said to resemble the Milky Way.

In the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordsmiths, Yoshimitsu is ranked along with Masamune and Yoshihiro as one of the three best smiths of all time. According to the *Meibutsu Chō*, this *tantō* once belonged to the Ashikaga clan, but it was later obtained by a merchant of Settsu (Ōsaka) and then was bought by the Hon'ami family. It was bought from them by Hitotsuyanagi Naosue and then passed through the hands of Kuroda Yoshitaka, Toyotomi Hidetsugu, and thence to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who gave it to Mori Hidemoto. In the fourth year of the Kanbun era (1664), it was given by Mori Tsunamoto to the fourth Tokugawa shogun, Ietsuna (r. 1651–80), in whose family it was passed down. HK



Kuniyoshi

## 69.

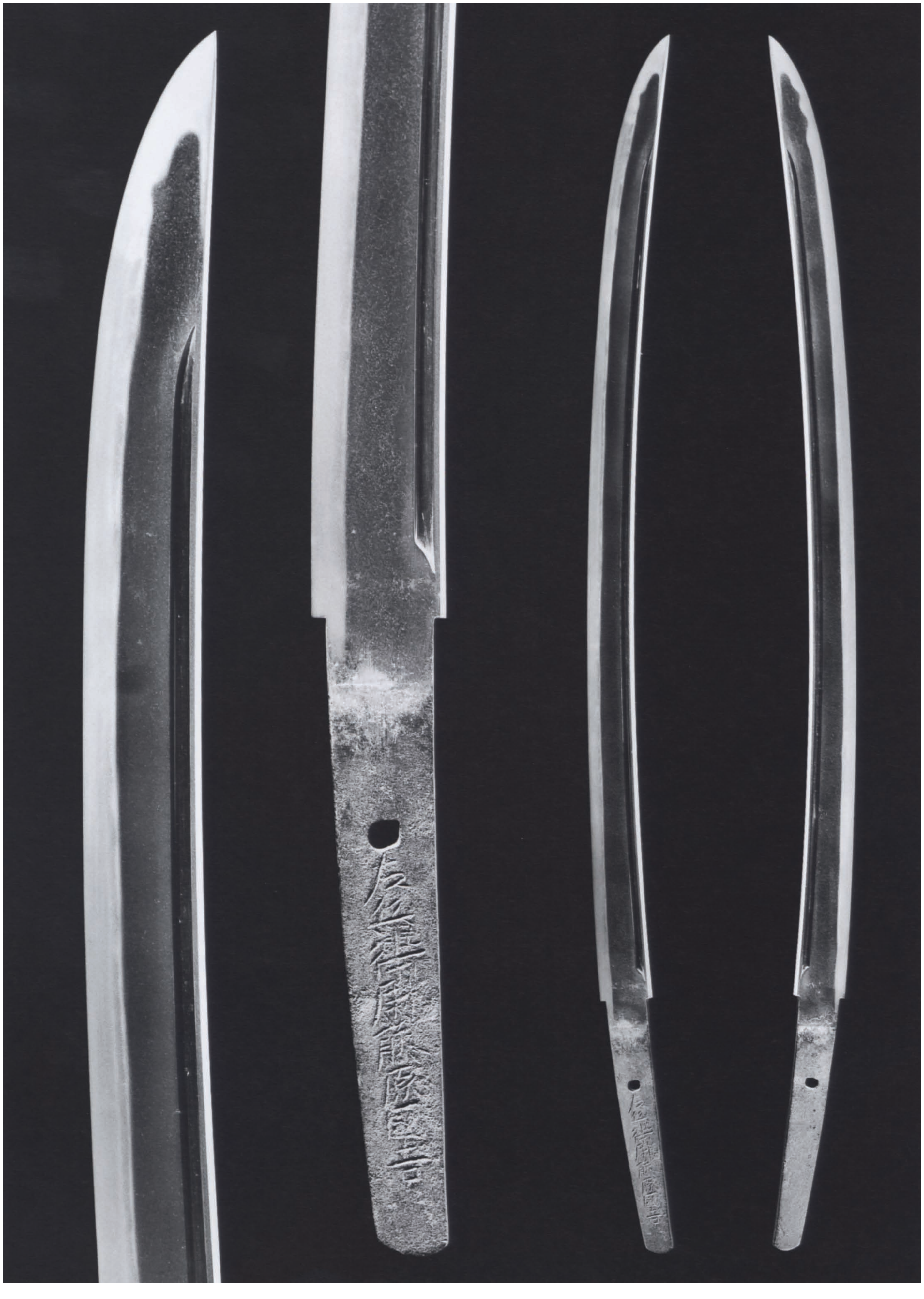
## Blade for an *uchigatana* (midlength sword), known as "Nakigitsune" (Crying Fox)

## 重要文化財 打刀 国吉 号：鳴狐

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 54 cm (21¼ in.); curvature 1.5 cm (⅝ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 左兵衛尉藤原国吉
*SAHYOENOJŌ FUJIWARA (NO) KUNIYOSHI*
Tokyo National Museum
Given by Watanabe Seiichiro
**Important Cultural Property**

Until the Muromachi period, it was customary for samurai to carry *tachi* (long, slung swords) suspended from the waist belt, and a shorter sword called an *uchigatana*—somewhere in length between the *tachi* and the *tantō* (dagger)—inserted through the belt. *Uchigatana* were convenient weapons and were carried by the nobility as well as the priesthood. In the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*—a twelfth-century handscroll depicting a Heian-period episode in which a government minister sets fire to Kyōto's Ōtemmon gate—there is an illustration of the attendant of a *keibishi* (an official who functioned as a policeman) carrying an *uchigatana*. Very few survive, however; this blade is the oldest known example that has a smith's signature.

Kuniyoshi is believed to have been either the son or brother of Awataguchi Norikuni, of Kyōto, and to have been active about 1267. Like the renowned Yoshimitsu of the Awataguchi school, Kuniyoshi made *tantō*; he also made many fine *tachi*. The forging here is strong and refined, and the *hamon* (tempering) is a bright and serene *suguha* (straight pattern), characteristic of Awataguchi work. The origin of the blade's nickname, "Nakigitsune" (Crying Fox), is not known. The sword was passed down in the collection of the Akimoto clan of Yamagata Prefecture. HK


左兵衛尉藤原国吉

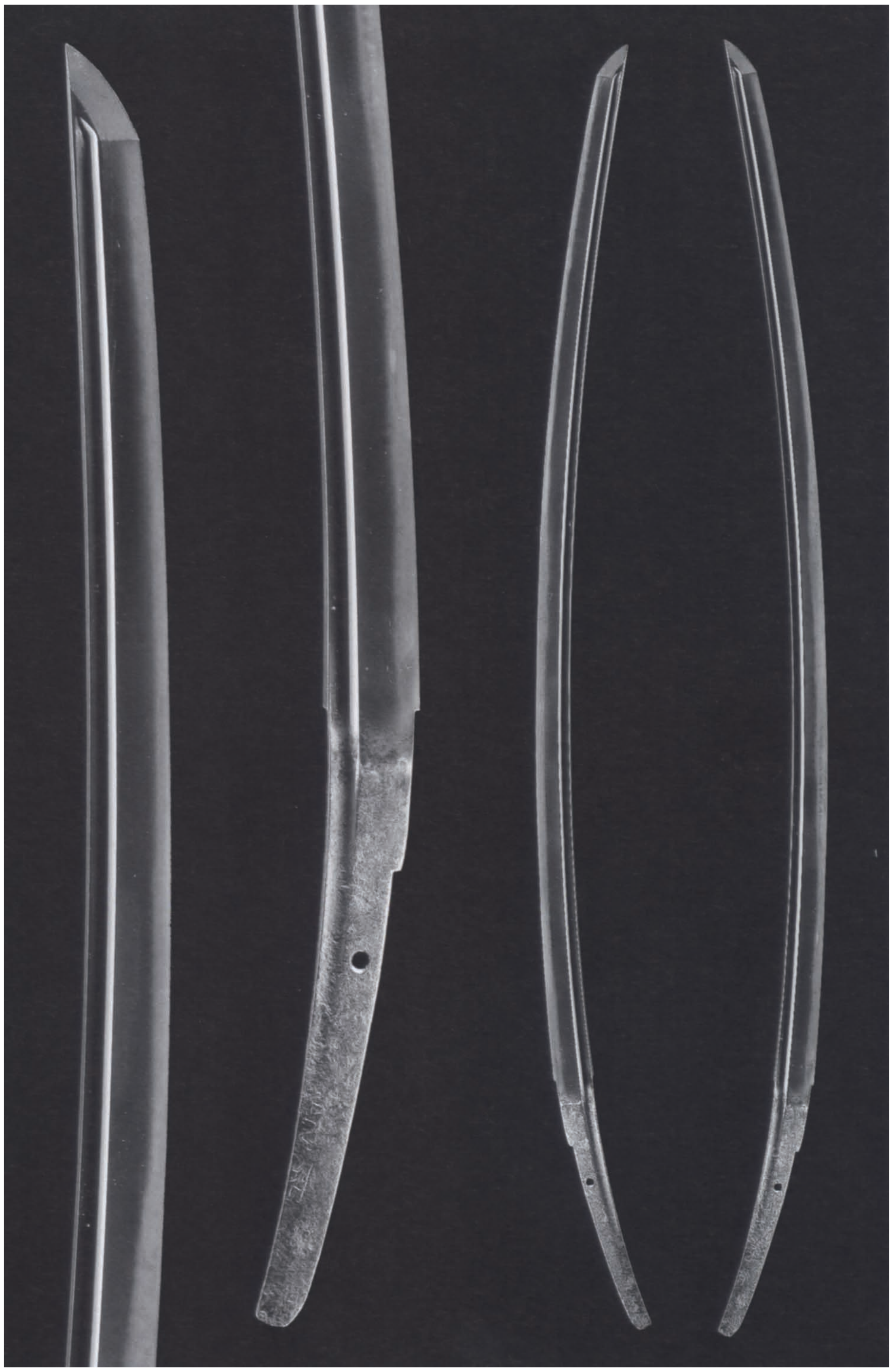
Sadatoshi

## 70.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 定利

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 78.8 cm (31 in.); curvature 3 cm (1 ⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 定利 SADATOSHI
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**



The swordsmith Sadatoshi was originally believed to have lived in Ayanokoji, in Kyōto, sometime about the Bun'ei era (1264–73), or about the same time as Kuniyuki, founder of the Rai school, and his son Kunitoshi, both of whom were also Kyōto smiths. Yet several characteristics of Sadatoshi's blades suggest a slightly earlier date, particularly their somewhat slender shape, deep ***koshi-zori*** curve (in which the center of the curvature is closer to the tang than to the point section), and ***hamon*** (tempering pattern) of ***ko-midare*** with ***ko-chōji*** (small, irregular patterns and small clove shapes). In light of this, and owing to the fact that Sadatoshi's works are somewhat close to the style of the Sanjō school, he is now recognized as having been active in the early Kamakura period. The Ayanokoji school to which he belonged was relatively small—other than Sadatoshi, Sadayoshi is the only other known smith of the school—and few of their swords survive. This is a representative *tachi* by Sadatoshi: outstanding in terms of its quality even when compared to the masterful works of the Sanjō, Awataguchi, and other contemporary schools of Kyōto.

HK

Kuniyuki

## 71.

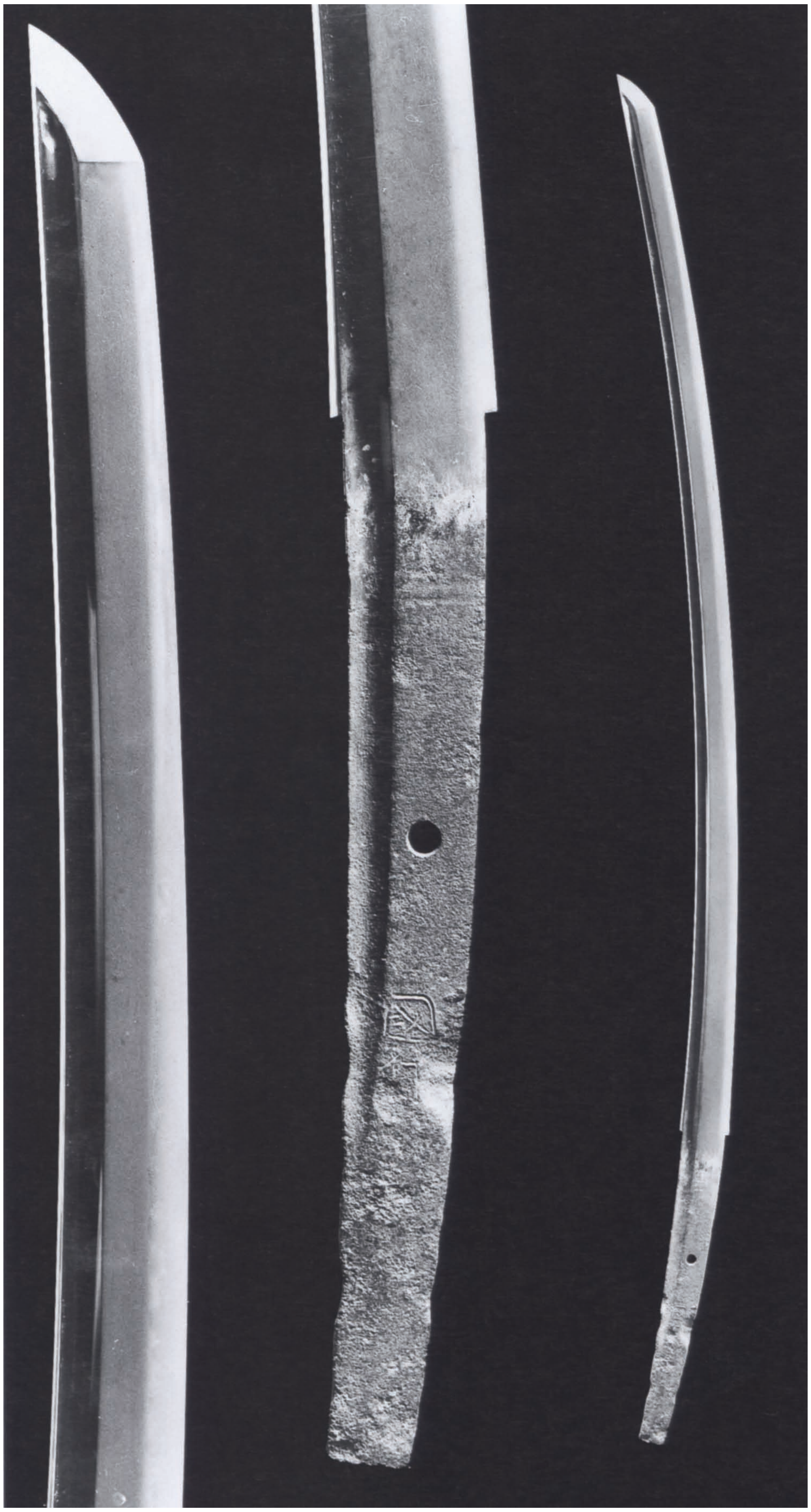
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 重要文化財 太刀 国行

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 69.7 cm (27½ in.); curvature 3.1 cm (1¼ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 国行 KUNIYUKI
Kunōzan Tōshōgū Shrine, Shizuoka Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

The Sanjō group of swordsmiths, who flourished in Kyōto during the Heian period, were succeeded by the Rai group, who rose to prominence during the middle Kamakura period and continued into the Nanbokuchō period. Although the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi* (cat. no. 211) and other historical sword documents name Kuniyoshi as founder of the Rai school, no sword made by him survives. His son, Kuniyuki, is thus now generally accepted as the school's founder.

Most of Kuniyuki's blades are *tachi*, although there are also a small number of *tantō* (daggers) by him. He signed both types with a two-character signature, as opposed to the three-character signatures of Rai Kunitoshi and Rai Kunimitsu, who included the clan name "Rai" on their works. His style is characterized by an elegant, deep curvature, a prominent *ko-itame hada* (tight wood grain pattern, resembling "pearskin"), and a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) of medium thickness with *gunome* (compact waves or zigzag patterns) and plentiful *ashi* (notch shapes). This *tachi* is typical of his work. In 1716 it was dedicated to the Kunōzan Tōshōgū, the shrine where Tokugawa Ieyasu was originally buried, by Tokugawa Yoshimune, the eighth Tokugawa shogun (r. 1716–45), on the occasion of the announcement of his investiture. HK



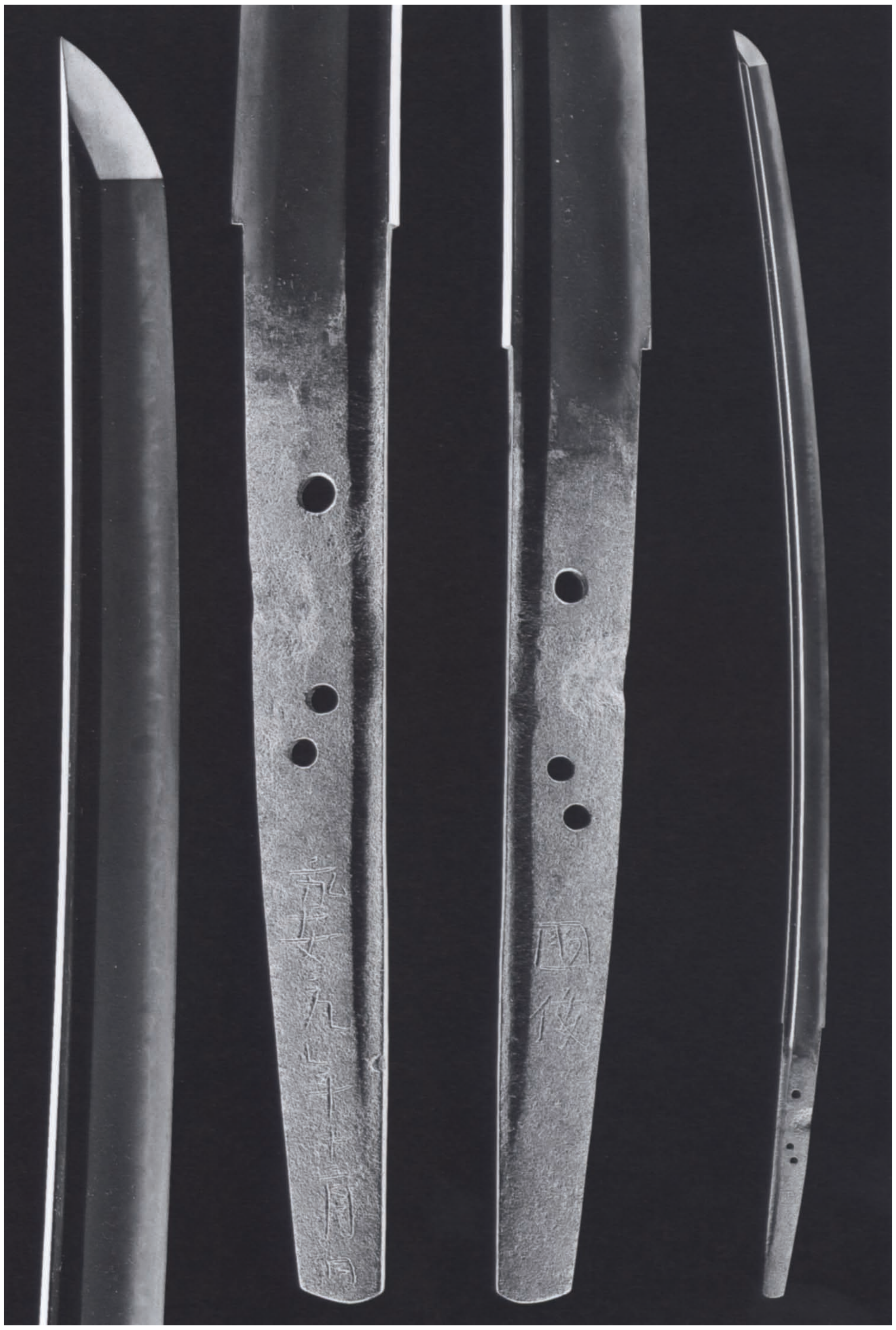
Kunitoshi

## 72.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 太刀 国俊

Kamakura period, 1278
Steel
L. 77.9 cm (30⅝ in.); curvature 2.1 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 国俊 *KUNITOSHI*;
dated on reverse: 弘安元年十二月日 *KOAN GANNEN*
*JUNIGATSU HI* (twelfth month of the first year of
the Kōan era [1278])
Tokyo National Museum



The Rai school of swordsmiths was founded by Kuniyuki and was distinct from the Awataguchi school, another group active in Kyōto. They flourished from the middle Kamakura to the Nanbokuchō period. This *tachi* is a typical blade by Kunitoshi, said to be Kuniyuki's son: note the wide *mihaba* (midpoint width); *ikubi-gissaki*, or "boar's-neck" point section (see cat. no. 60); forging grain of fine *ko-itame* (tight wood grain) mixed closely with *mokume* (burl grain); and *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *chōji-midare* (clove shapes) mixed with *ko-gunome* (small compact waves), many *ashi* and *yō* (notches and isolated spots), and much *ko-nie* (small visible crystals of steel).

Like his father, Kunitoshi signed his name with two characters. There is, however, another, later smith, also named Kunitoshi, who signed his name with three characters, for "Rai Kunitoshi" (see cat. no. 73). Currently there is no consensus as to whether the two smiths were one and the same or if they instead represent two generations. The blades inscribed with the two-character signature tend to be grandly shaped, like this example. Those signed "Rai Kunitoshi" are usually more slender and elegant, with a forging grain of fine, tightly packed *itame* said to be the most beautiful among all Japanese swords. The *hamon* (tempering pattern) of those works is mostly *suguha* (straight), and there are never large *midare-ba* (irregular patterns in the cutting section).

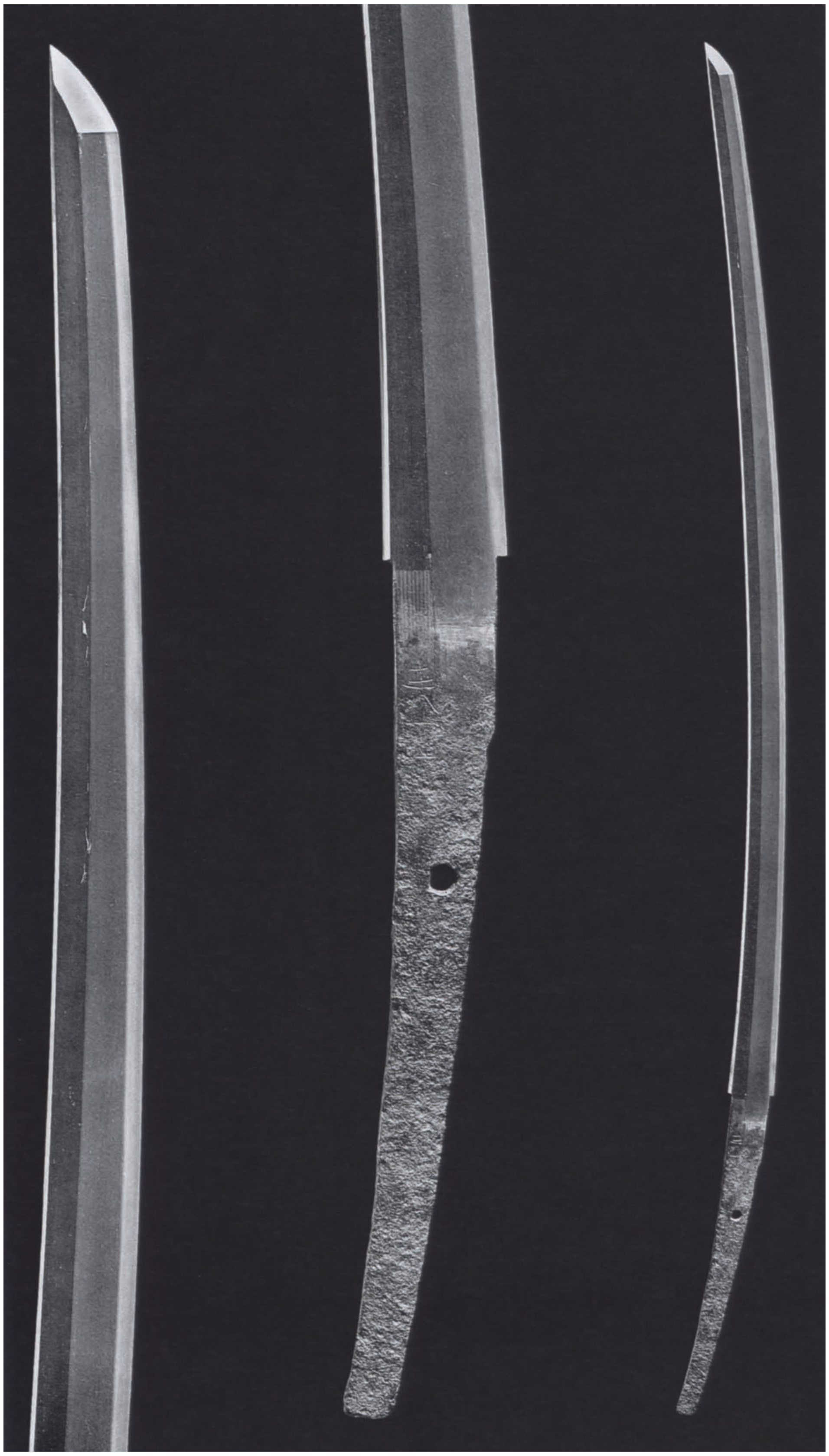
There is one extant blade signed "Rai Kunitoshi" that is dated the fourth year of the Showa era (1315) and inscribed "*toshi nanajūgo*" (aged 75). Calculating back from that date, this blade was made when that smith was thirty-eight—in his prime—making it conceivable that all of the swords signed "Kunitoshi" and "Rai Kunitoshi" are in fact the work of a single smith whose style simply evolved over the years. Given its two-character signature and inscribed date, this sword is an indispensible piece for study of the Rai school. Even though it is recorded in the *Kozan Oshigata*, an eighteenth-century book of drawings of swords, and has been well known since the Edo period, we do not know who owned it at that time. During the Meiji era it was given to the emperor by Saisho Atsushi, a retainer of the Satsuma *han* (domain) who became an administrator in the Meiji government.

HK

Rai Kunitoshi

## 73.
## Blade for a *kodachi* (small slung sword)
## 国宝 小太刀 来国俊

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 54.4 cm (21⅜ in.); curvature 1.7 cm (⅝ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 来国俊 *RAI KUNITOSHI*
Nikkō Futarasan-jinja Shrine, Tochigi Prefecture
**National Treasure**



The Rai school of Kyōto was founded by the swordsmith Kuniyuki in about the mid-thirteenth century (see cat. no. 71). The school was continued by Kunitoshi, who was followed, apparently, by Rai Kunitoshi, active in the late Kamakura period. There are different theories, however, as to whether Kunitoshi and Rai Kunitoshi were one and the same or different smiths. The signature "Kunitoshi" is found written with two characters as well as with three, when it includes the family name "Rai." One extant sword signed "Kunitoshi" is inscribed with the date of the first year of the Kōan era (1278) (cat. no. 72). The earliest sword signed "Rai Kunitoshi" is dated the third year of the Shō-ō era (1290), while the latest is dated the first year of the Genkō era (1321). Moreover, the characteristics of the blades signed in those respective ways are quite different. "Kunitoshi" made swords with a wide *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) containing large *chōji* (clove shapes) as well as pieces with a more flamboyant *chōji midare* (clove-shaped irregular patterns) that could almost be mistaken for the work of the Bizen Fukuoka Ichimonji school (see, e.g., cat. nos. 63, 64). Many of the blades by "Rai Kunitoshi," by comparison, have a medium *suguha* with gentle *midare* mixed with small *chōji*.

This beautifully shaped, extremely elegant sword is shorter than a typical *tachi* and is thus known as a *kodachi*, or "small" *tachi*. It was intended to be carried either by a young samurai or in tandem with a normal-length *tachi*. The only extant *kodachi* by Rai Kunitoshi, it is outstanding among all Japanese swords for the beauty of its tight *itame* (wood grain) forging and for the brightness and clarity of its narrow *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern). HK

Rai Kunimitsu

## 74.
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)
## 国宝 太刀 来国光

---

Kamakura period, 1327
Steel
L. 79.1 cm (31⅛ in.); curvature 3.6 cm (1⅜ in.)
Inscribed and dated on obverse of tang: 来国光 *RAI KUNIMITSU*; 嘉暦二年十二月日 *KARYAKU NINEN JUNIGATSU HI* (twelfth month of the second year of the Karyaku era [1327])
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**

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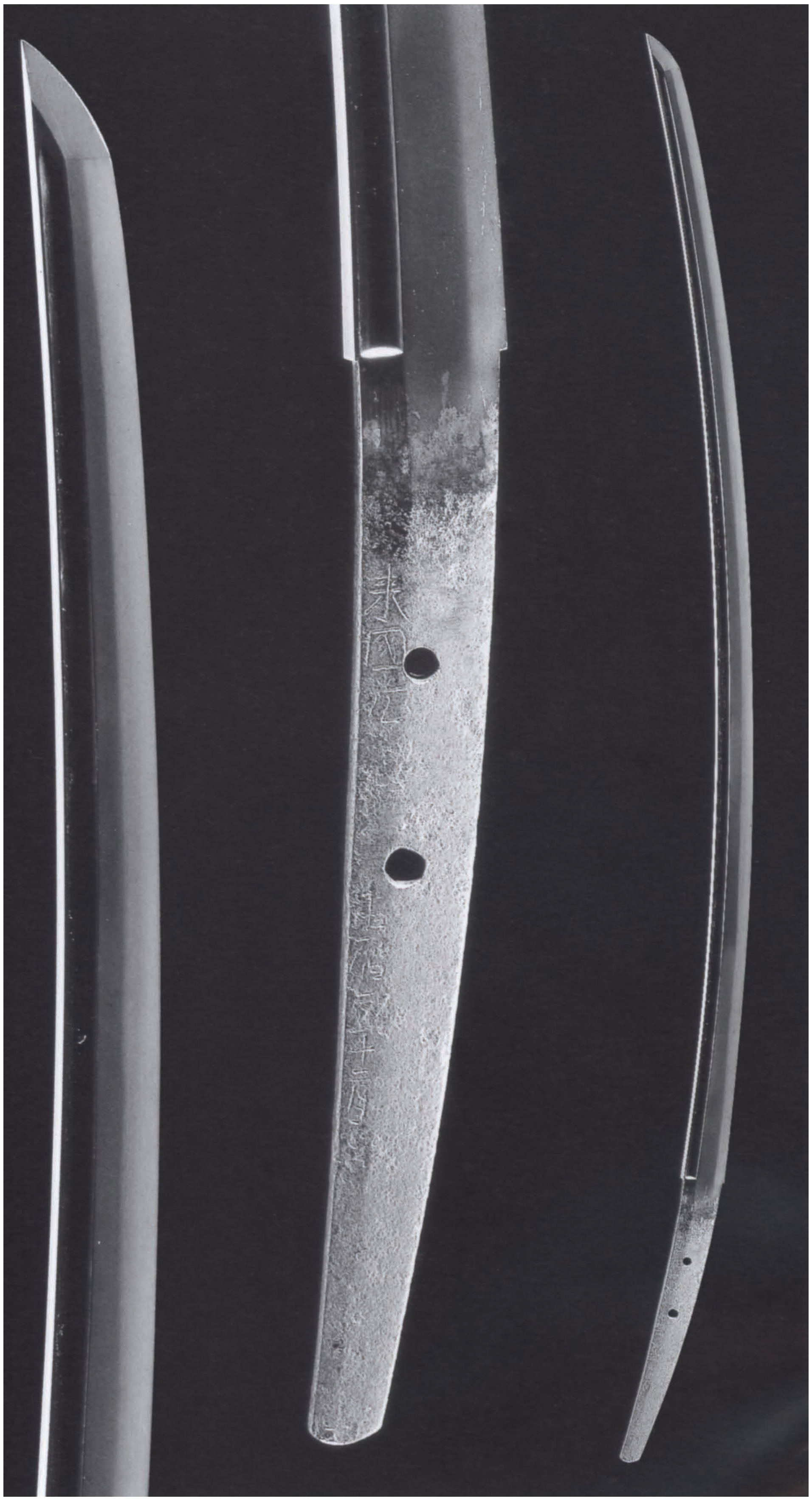
Rai Kunimitsu is said to have been the son of Rai Kunitoshi (see cat. no. 72). From the signatures on his swords, the oldest of which is inscribed 1326 and the latest 1351, we know that he was active from the late Kamakura into the Nanbokuchō period. The stylistic characteristics of the Rai school—a deep, beautiful curve; a fine, close *jigane* (steel surface texture); and a refined *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) with variations—are exemplified in this *tachi*, a masterpiece by Rai Kunimitsu and a sword ranked among the finest works of the Rai school.

The *tantō* (daggers) and *tachi* (slung swords) by Kunimitsu are the most numerous extant works by the Rai school. In addition to blades in the traditional Rai style, however, he made some resembling works by Yukimitsu and Masamune of Sagami, smiths who were active in the same period. The latter typically have a *hamon* of *notare-ba* (broad undulations) and *gunome* (small waves) mixed into large *midare* (irregular patterns) as well as a pointed, or *togari*-style, *bōshi*, the tempering pattern in the point section.

HK



Tsunetsugu

## 75.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

重要文化財　太刀　恒次

---

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 76.8 cm (30¼ in.); curvature 2.3 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of tang: 恒次 *TSUNETSUGU*
Tsuchiura City Museum, Ibaraki Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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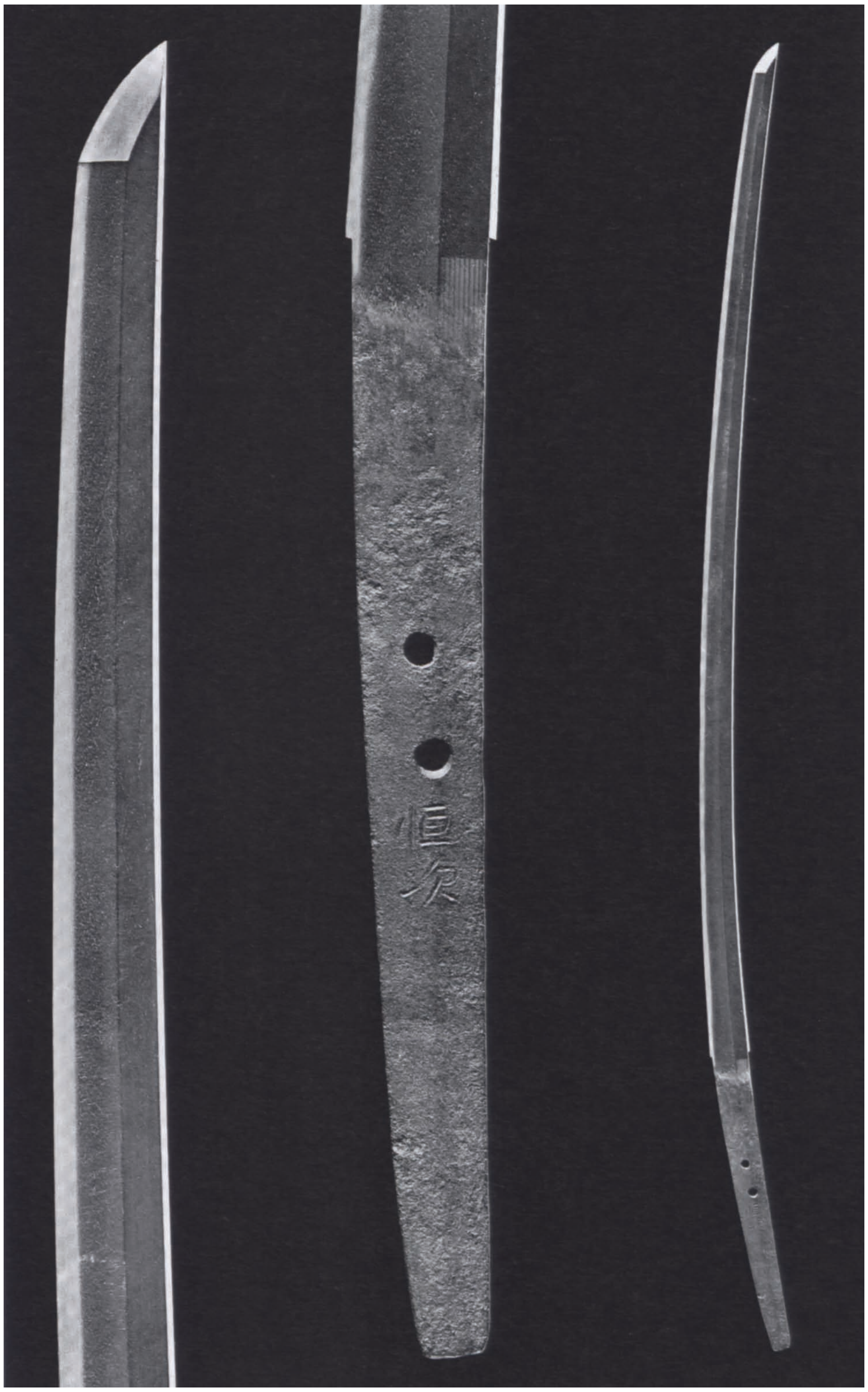


The Aoe school of swordsmiths, named after a town in Bitchū province (present-day Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture), flourished from the time of its founder, Yasutsugu, in the Heian period, until the Nanbokuchō period. The Aoe style changed dramatically over the centuries the school was active. Aoe work from the Heian and early Kamakura periods is thus referred to as *Ko*-Aoe, or "Old Aoe"; that from the middle to late Kamakura period is *Naka*-Aoe or *Chū*-Aoe, meaning "Middle Aoe"; and that from the Nanbokuchō period is *Sue*-Aoe, or "Late Aoe" (see also cat. no. 90). Until the early Kamakura period, Aoe blades typically had a *hada* (forging grain structure) of prominent *itame* (wood grain) with a dark *utsuri* (a reflective or "misty" band parallel to the *hamon*) and a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) of *ko-nie* (small visible crystals of steel). During the late Kamakura period numerous blades were made with a subdued *suguha hamon* with slanted *ashi* (notch shapes). In the Nanbokuchō period the Aoe style changed again, favoring a more flamboyant *hamon* of slanting *chōji-midare* (clove-shaped irregular patterns).

Tsunetsugu, the maker of this *tachi*, is considered a representative smith of the Aoe school from the early Kamakura period. He was also one of the *Go Ban Kaji*: a group of smiths who assisted the exiled (or "retired") Emperor Go-Toba in making swords (see cat. no. 62). This blade shows all of the characteristics of the *Ko*-Aoe school, particularly the tight *itame* (wood grain) forging, *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern), *ō-sujikai* file marks (which slant steeply to the right), and the signature on the *ura* (reverse) of the tang. Upon his retirement, Mitsukuni, the second Tokugawa lord of Mito domain, gave this sword to the Tsuchiya family of Tsuchiura. HK

Mitsutada

## 76.

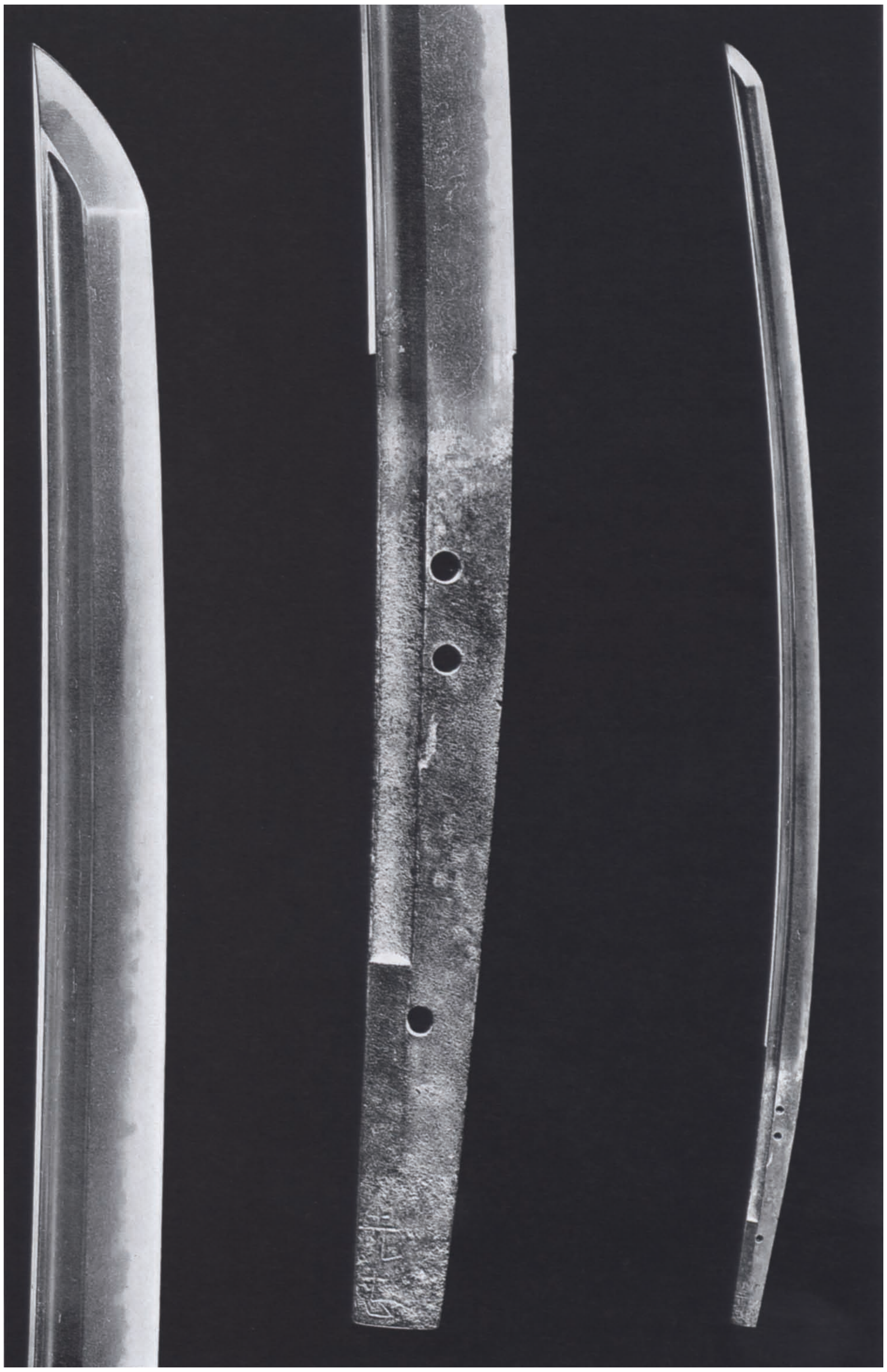
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 光忠

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 72.4 cm (28½ in.); curvature 3 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 光忠 MITSUTADA
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture
**National Treasure**

Although many fine swords by the great smiths of the Osafune group of Bizen province—the largest school of Japanese swordsmiths—survive today, there are no extant examples by Chikatada, who in the historic books on swords is referred to as the school's founder. Today the de facto founder of the school is thus considered to have been his son, Mitsutada, the maker of this superb blade. The sword has been shortened, but it is still a grandly shaped, broad *tachi* with a "boar's-neck" point section (*ikubi-gissaki*). There is considerable *midare-utsuri* (areas of misty or irregular reflection) over the *itame* (wood grain) forging, and the *hamon* (tempering pattern) has *chōji-midare* (clove-shaped irregular patterns) with *gunome* (small compact waves).

The Fukuoka Ichimonji school, which developed tempering patterns featuring *ō-chōji midare* (large clove shapes) and *juka-chōji* (double or triple clove shapes), was still active in Bizen during Mitsutada's time. One of the main characteristics of Mitsutada's work is the *gunome hamon*, which is more prominent than that of the Fukuoka Ichimonji smiths. While few signed blades by Mitsutada exist, many unsigned pieces have been attributed to him; these swords tend to have an extravagant *hamon* of *ō-chōji* with *kawazuko-chōji* (single, rounded *chōji* resembling tadpoles). The *chōji* on this example do not rise and fall as dramatically as on some of the pieces attributed to Mitsutada, but the sword is nonetheless outstanding among Mitsutada's signed pieces—and, in fact, among all of his works—for the exceptionally powerful and bright *hamon*. It was given by the fifth Tokugawa shogun, Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), to Naritsuna of the Owari Tokugawa house in the eleventh year of the Genroku era (1698).



HK

## Nagamitsu

### 77.

### Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword), known as "Dai Hannya Nagamitsu"

国宝 太刀 名物 大般若長光

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Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 73.6 cm (29 in.); curvature 2.9 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 長光 *NAGAMITSU*
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**

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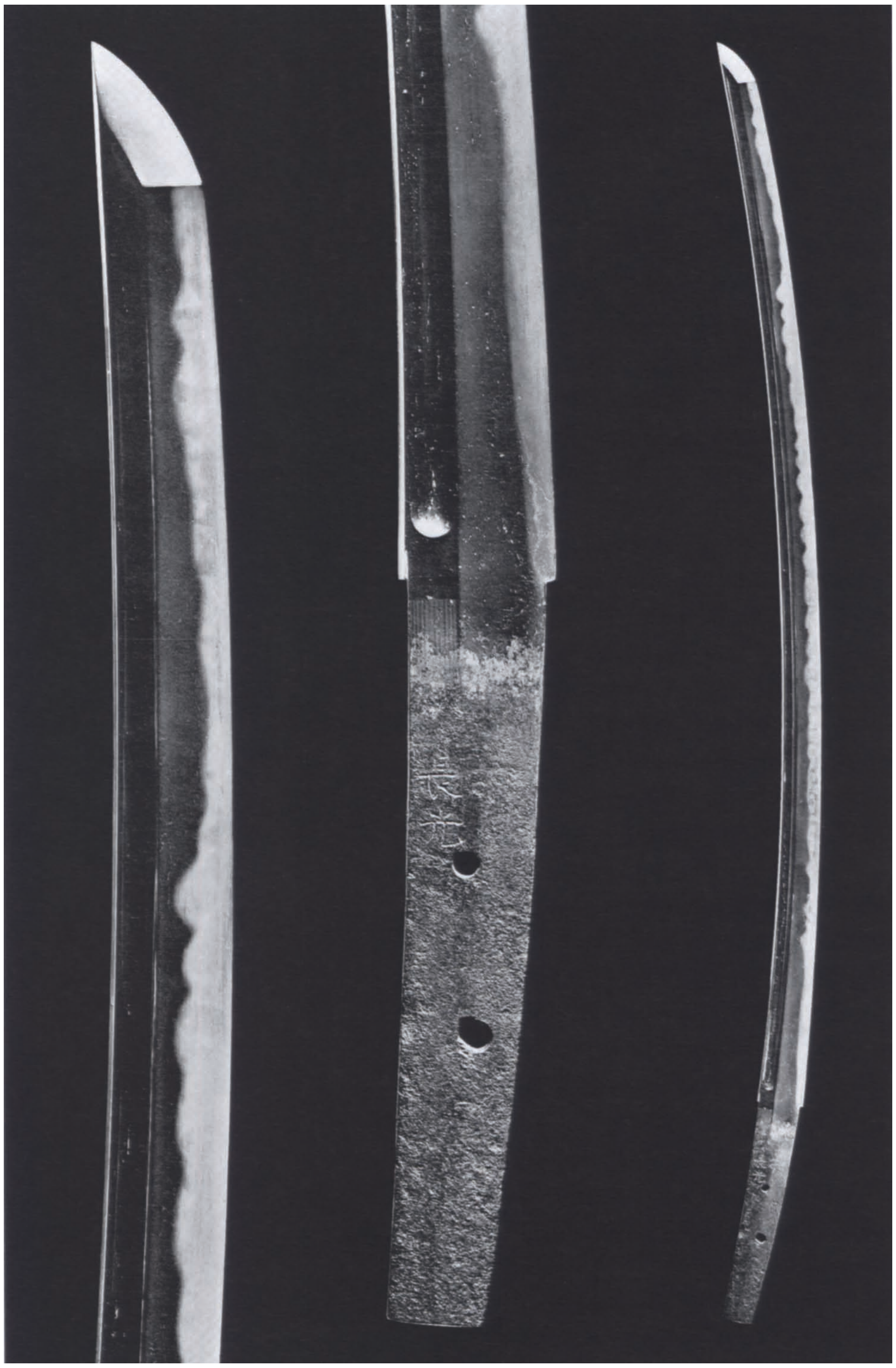
This is a characteristic sword by Nagamitsu, a second-generation smith of the Osafune school and the son of Mitsutada, today considered the school's founder (see cat. no. 76). Of the known dated blades by Nagamitsu, the oldest is 1274 and the latest is 1303. His early works resemble those by Mitsutada, with large *chōji* (clove shapes) mixed with *gunome* (compact waves) and *kawazuko chōji* (tadpole-shaped *chōji*). Among his later works, many have a tight *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) with some *gunome*. This sword is typical of the earlier works, mixing *gunome* with *chōji* and some *kawazuko chōji* in what is, overall, an exceptionally grand *hamon*.



The sword is called "Dai Hannya" because in the Muromachi period it was valued at 600 *kan* (equal to about 2,250 kilograms of silver), and there are 600 volumes—also refered to as *kan*—of the *Dai Hannya Sutra* (Heart Sutra). Esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece," it was in the possession of the shogun's clan during the Muromachi period and was given by Yoshiteru (r. 1545–65), the thirteenth shogun of the Ashikaga *bakufu* (military government), to Miyoshi Nagayoshi, a powerful daimyo. It later came into the possession of Oda Nobunaga, who gave it to Tokugawa Ieyasu in honor of his military success at the Battle of Anegawa (July 30, 1570). Ieyasu then gave it to Okudaira Nobumasa as a reward for his own military success at the Battle of Nagashino (June 29, 1575), and he in turn passed it to his son Matsudaira Masaaki, who became lord of the Musashi Oshi *han* (domain), in whose family it was passed down. Given this particularly lengthy and storied provenance, the sword is especially valuable as a well-documented example of a blade being exchanged among military houses as an expression of gratitude. HK

## Nagamitsu

### 78.

### *Naginata* (staff weapon)

### 国宝 薙刀 長光

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Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. of blade, 44.2 cm (17⅜ in.); L. of tang, 63.5 cm (25 in.); curvature 1.7 cm (⅝ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 備前国長船住人長光造
*BIZEN (NO) KUNI OSAFUNE JU NIN NAGAMITSU TSUKURU*
Sano Art Museum, Shizuoka Prefecture
**National Treasure**

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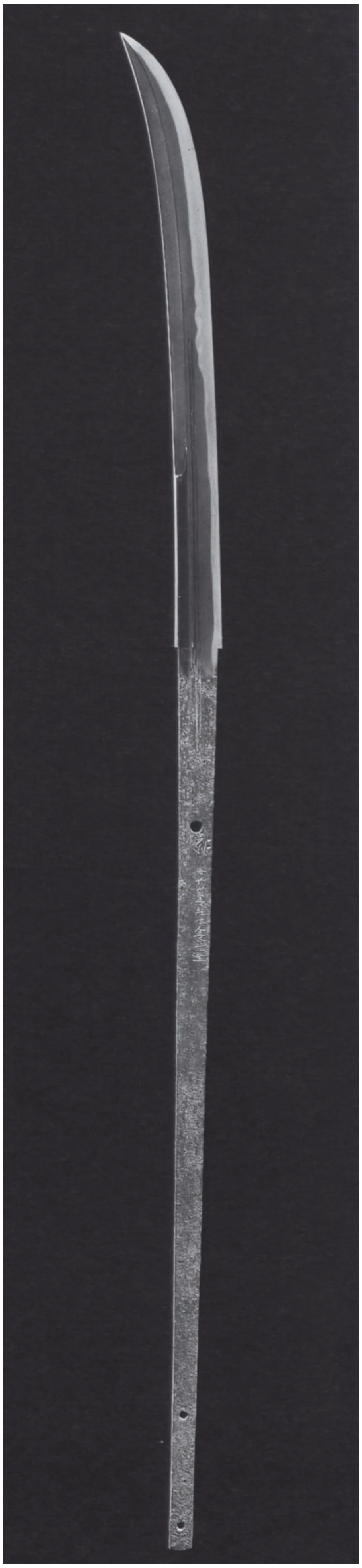
The *naginata* is a type of staff weapon that has traditionally been translated as a "halberd" but in fact is closer to a glaive in Western terminology. They were used mostly by lower-class samurai and were made beginning about the Heian period (12th century). With the exception of a few Kamakura-period examples, however, there are almost no surviving *naginata* that predate the sixteenth century. This example is one such rarity: a particularly well-made, carefully preserved *naginata* from the Kamakura period. The forging is as fine as that found on *tachi*, the *jigane* (or *jitetsu*)—the surface texture of the steel—is exquisite, and the *hamon* (tempering pattern) is bright, evidence of a superior heat-treating technique. The long tang, perfectly preserved in its original form, is inscribed with Sanskrit characters called *bonji*: that on the *omote* (obverse) symbolizes the Buddha Amida Nyorai, and that on the *ura* (reverse) symbolizes Kongō Yata Myōō, one of the "Kings of Light" of Shingon Buddhism. The characters are superbly carved in *yagen-bori*, an engraving technique that employs triangular-section cuts, which was used during the Kamakura period on stone stele and other objects (the name derives from the *yagen*, a device for grinding medicine). The blade's maker, Nagamitsu, was the leading smith of Osafune, in Bizen province, during the late thirteenth century. He is believed to have had a large studio and numerous pupils.

In the eleventh year of the Bun'ei era (1274), a large Mongol army attacked Iki and Tsushima, islands in western Japan. This assault was followed in the fourth year of the Kōan era (1281) by an attempted invasion of Kyūshū by a combined Mongol and Korean force. Japan narrowly escaped disaster in that instance by virtue of a timely typhoon, which sank the battle fleet, and the Kamakura *bakufu* (military government) reacted by instituting several measures designed to protect the nation against future calamities. One such measure ordered prayers for the expulsion of enemy nations to be said in Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples throughout the country. Thus, in addition to the large numbers of swords being made for the high-class samurai to take into battle, there were sacred pieces made that were intended for divine supplication, including, it is believed, this *naginata*. During the Edo period the blade was preserved by the Matsudaira family of Tsuyama, in Sakushu province (Mimasaka, in present-day Okayama Prefecture). It was later a beloved possession of Sato Kanji (1897–1985), who gave it to the Sano Art Museum. WT



Sanemitsu

## 79.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

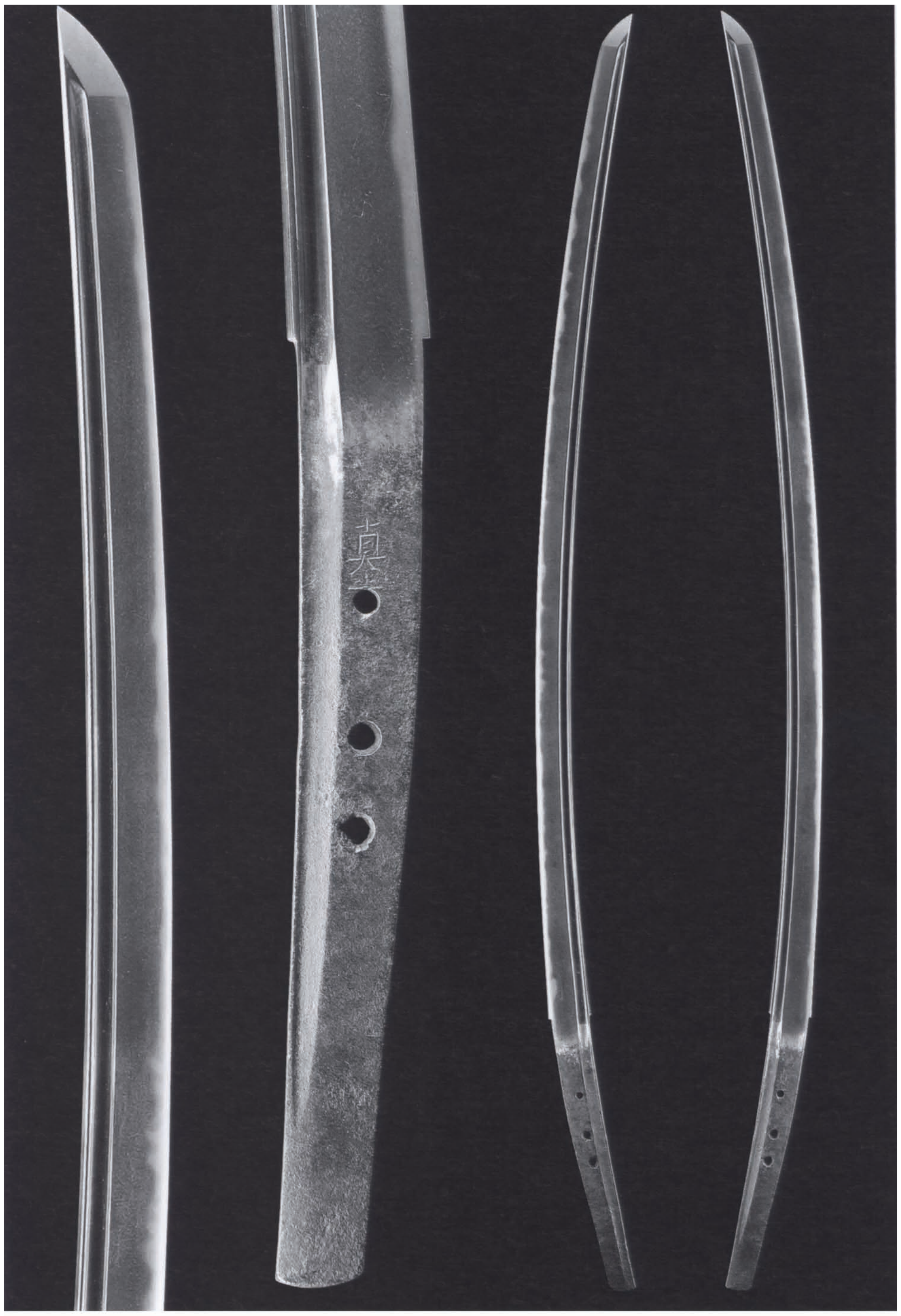
## 国宝 太刀 真光

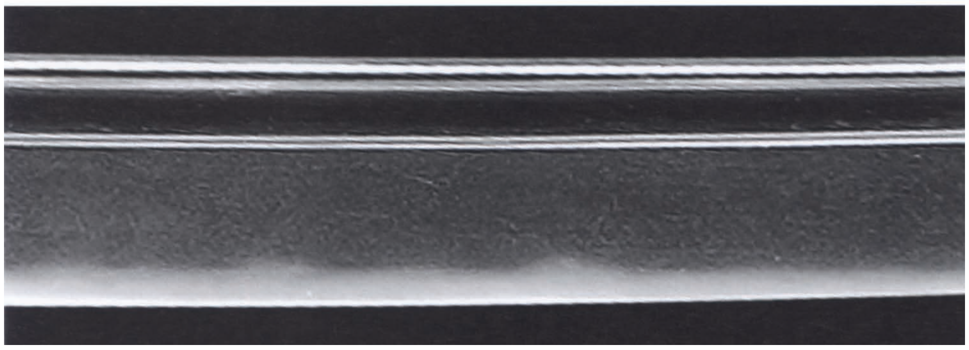
Kamakura period, 14th century
Steel
L. 77.3 cm (30⅜ in.); curvature 2.9 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 真光 SANEMITSU
Chido Museum, Yamagata Prefecture
**National Treasure**

This *tachi* is one of only two extant blades by Sanemitsu, who is held to have been the pupil of Nagamitsu (see cat. no. 78). Considered Sanemitsu's representative piece, it is in no way inferior to the works of his renowned teacher, with its somewhat slender, refined shape, beautiful *itame* (wood grain) forging, and gentle *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *ko-chōji* and *ko-gunome* (small clove shapes and small compact waves).

After Oda Nobunaga defeated Takeda Katsuyori, daimyo of Kai province, in 1582, he visited Tokugawa Ieyasu of Mikawa in gratitude for his role in the victory. Nobunaga then gave this sword to Ieyasu's valued retainer Sakai Tadatsugu (1527–1596) when he called on him at his residence at Yoshida Castle. Until quite recently the sword was still preserved by the Sakai as a family treasure. The mounting (cat. no. 120), which was given along with the sword by Nobunaga, is laquered with a *nashiji* ground (layers of clear lacquer dusted with gold) but has no family *mon* (insignia) on the scabbard: an example of an *ito maki no tachi*—a sword worn by samurai on ceremonial occasions—before such mountings became formalized. Indeed, it is the oldest example of an *ito maki no tachi* whose period is known with certainty.

HK





Kagemitsu

## 80.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger)

## 国宝 短刀 景光

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Kamakura period, 1323
Steel
L. 28.3 cm (11⅛ in.); slight curvature
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 備州長船景光 *BISHU OSAFUNE (NO) JU KAGEMITSU*; dated on reverse: 元亨三年三月日 *GENKO SANNEN SANGATSU HI*
(third month of the Genkō era [1323])
Saitama Prefectural Museum of History
and Folklore
**National Treasure**

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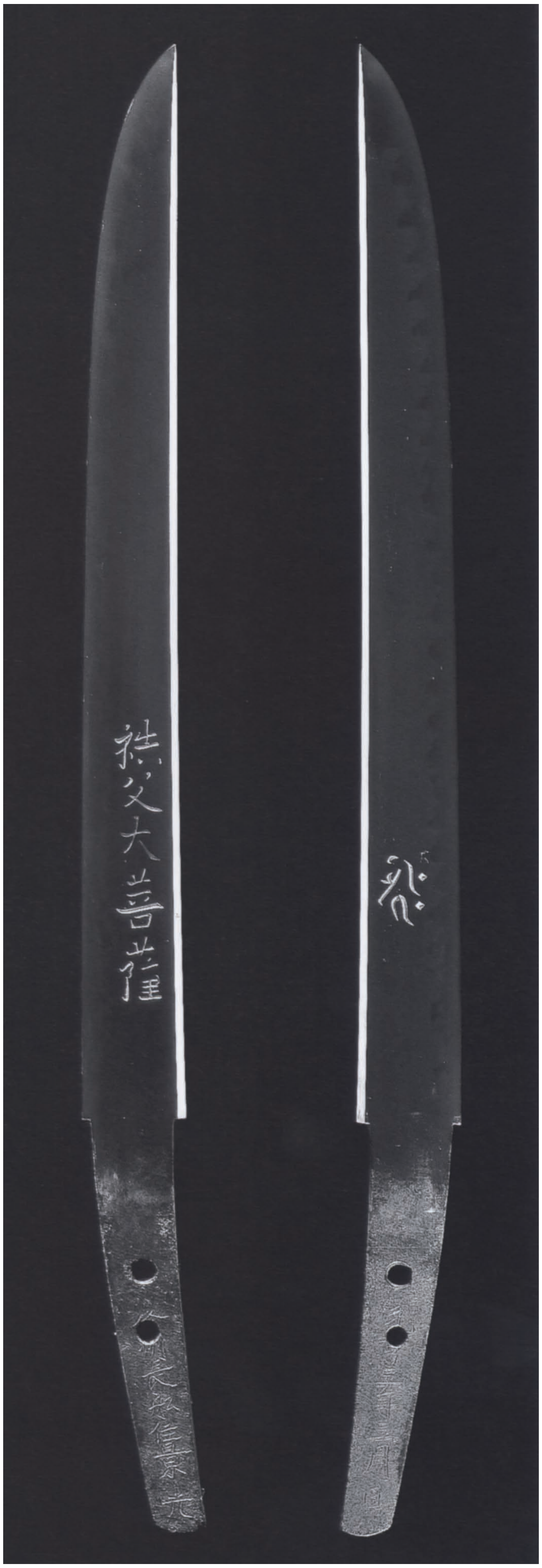
Kagemitsu was a third-generation swordsmith of the Osafune group, following Mitsutada and Nagamitsu. While there are few extant *tantō* by Nagamitsu, there are many by Kagemitsu, divided into two types. One has a "sawtooth" tempering pattern in the *kata-ochi gunome-ba* style, which Kagemitsu introduced. In that style, one side of the *gunome* (compact mounds or waves) in the *hamon* (tempering pattern) angles sharply down, while the other side is curved. The other type of *tantō* by Kagemitsu has a *suguha* (straight) *hamon.*

This *tantō* is the best example of the *kata-ochi gunome* style. Carved on the *omote* (obverse) are the characters for "Chichibu Daibosatsu," and on the *ura* (reverse) are Sanskrit characters (*bonji*) representing the Buddhist deities Amida Nyorai and Senju Kannon. Chichibu Daibosatsu, the Myōken Bosatsu (bodhisattva) of Chichibu-jinja, a shrine in Saitama Prefecture, was venerated by the samurai groups of that region. The *tantō* appears to have been commissioned from Kagemitsu by the Ogawara clan, who controlled neighboring Harima province (present-day Hyōgo Prefecture), for dedication to the shrine. It is accompanied by a black-lacquered mounting considered the best of its type (cat. no. 118). Two *tachi* (slung swords) related to the Ogawara clan also have inscriptions recording their dedication to the Chichibu shrine. This *tantō* was owned by the daimyo Uesugi Kenshin in the Muromachi period and was handed down within the Uesugi family. HK



Kanenaga

## 81.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

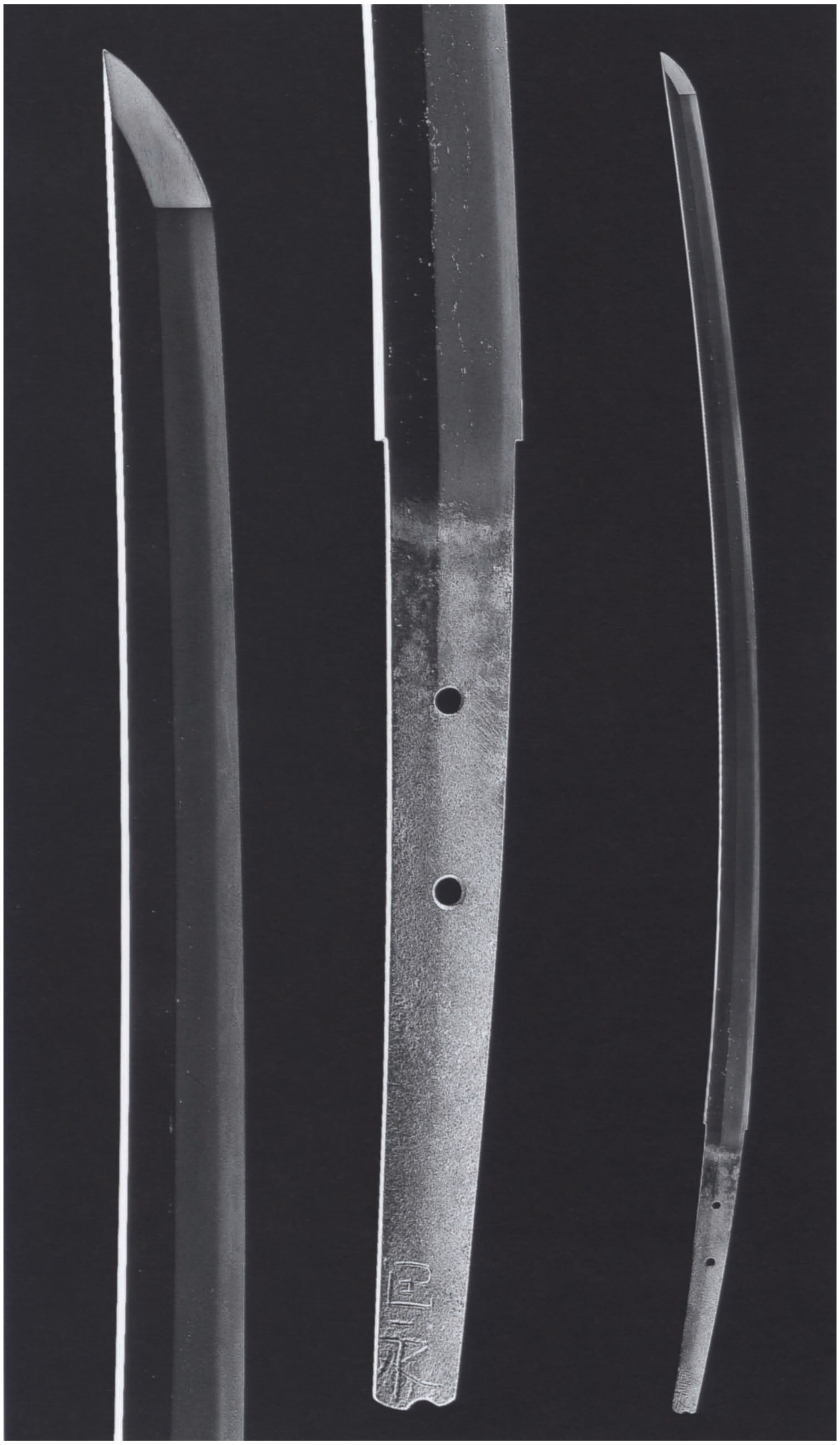
## 太刀 包永

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 72.4 cm (28½ in.); curvature 2.3 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 包永 KANENAGA
Tokyo National Museum

The Senjuin school of swordsmiths flourished in Nara, Japan's ancient capital city, during the Heian period; the Tegai, Hōshō, Shikkake, and Taima schools flourished there during the Kamakura period. Together, they are known as the Five Schools of Yamato, referring to one of Japan's historic provinces (in present-day Nara Prefecture). Many of the blades made by the Yamato school have a forging grain of flowing *itame-hada* (wood grain pattern), but there is also the pure, straight *masame-hada* characteristic of the Hōshō school (see cat. no. 82). Compared to the typical *hamon* (tempering pattern) of the Osafune, a school that flourished from the middle to late Kamakura period—generally a gorgeous *chōji-ba* in *nioi* (clove shapes in a fine "mist" of steel crystals)—that of the Yamato school was altogether more subdued: often a narrow *suguha* (straight) *hamon* containing many *nie* (visible crystals of steel).

The maker of this sword, Kanenaga, is said to have lived by the Tengai gate of the Tōdai-ji, a Buddhist temple in Nara. His name continued to be used by successive generations of smiths from the late Kamakura to the Muromachi period. This sword exemplifies Kanenaga's work, with its high *shinogi* (ridge); wide *shinogi-ji* (blade surface between the ridge and the back edge); flowing *itame* (wood grain) forging; and *hamon* with varied activity, such as *sunagashi*, a grain structure that resembles drifting lines of sand.

HK



Sadayoshi

## 82.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger), known as "Ō-Hōshō" (Great Hōshō)

## 重要文化財 短刀 号：大保昌

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Kamakura period, 1317
Steel
L. 28.5 cm (11¼ in.); no curvature
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 南都高市郡住藤原貞吉 *NANTO TAKECHI GORI JU FUJIWARA SADAYOSHI*; dated on reverse: 文保元丁巳年二月吉日 *BUNPŌ GAN HINOTO-MI DOSHI NIGATSU KICHIJITSU* (an auspicious day in the second month of the Bunpō era [1317])
Tokyo National Museum
Given by Mr. Watanabe Seiichiro
**Important Cultural Property**

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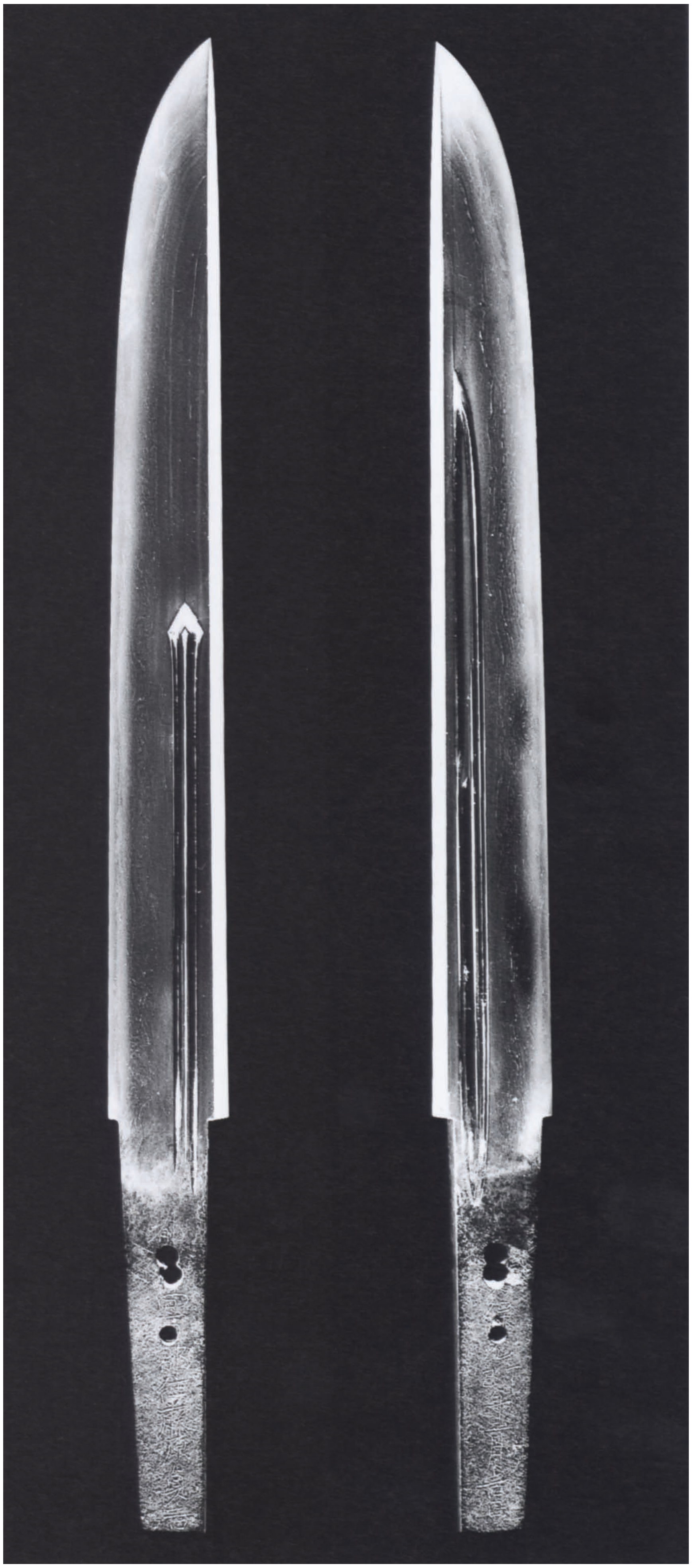
A number of great swordsmiths emerged during the late Kamakura period: Rai Kunimitsu in Kyōto, Osafune Kagemitsu in Bizen, and Masamune in Sagami, all active about the same time. In Yamato province, the oldest center for the manufacture of Japanese swords, the Five Schools of the Yamato tradition flourished: the Senjuin, Tegai, Taima, Shikkake, and Hōshō. The maker of this *tantō*, Sadayoshi, is considered a representative smith of the Hōshō school.

The style of the Yamato tradition is characterized by a tasteful forging pattern of flowing *itame* (wood grain) with the occasional *masame-hada* (straight grain), and a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) with *hotsure* (frayed edges), *nijū-ba* (doubled temper lines), and *kuichigai-ba* (slightly overlapping temper lines). The Hōshō are particularly renowned for their perfect *masame* texture and for a *hamon* characterized by a mixture of *suguha* and a "striped" configuration, with *hotsure* becoming *nijū-ba* and *kuichigai-ba*: all traits exemplified by this *tantō*, whose original vigor remains undiminished by polishing. Because of its substantial width and thickness, the blade is known as "Ō-Hōshō" (Great Hōshō). It was preserved in the collection of the Maeda family of Kaga province (in present-day Ishikawa Prefecture). HK



Shintogo Kunimitsu

## 83.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger)

## 重要文化財 短刀 国光

---

Kamakura period, 13th century
Steel
L. 25.1 cm (9⅞ in.); *uchi-zori* curvature
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 国光 KUNIMITSU
Sano Art Museum, Shizuoka Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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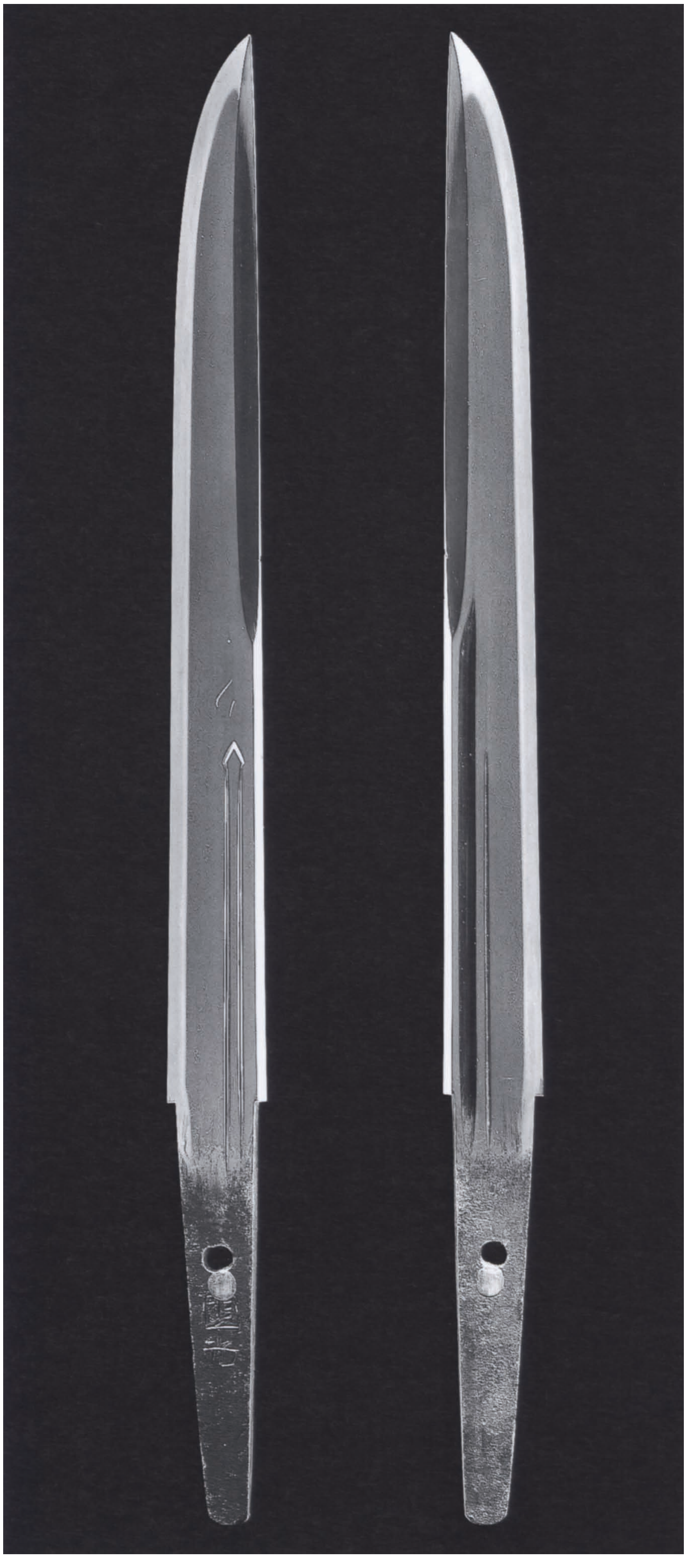


The swordsmith Shintogo Kunimitsu was retained by the *bakufu* (military government) at Kamakura, where he founded the Kamakura group of smiths. Although there are several theories as to the identity of his teacher, judging from his highly refined style he was most likely originally of the Awataguchi school, in Kyōto. Kunimitsu nurtured many pupils, including Yukimitsu (see cat. no. 84), and it is sometimes said he influenced Masamune, often described as the most famous of all Japanese swordsmiths (see cat. no. 86).

*Tantō* (daggers) are generally *hira-zukuri* in form, meaning that they are flat and have no ridge (*shinogi*). This unusual example by Kunimitsu is in the *kanmuri-otoshi* style: it has a ridge, and the ridge passes through the *kissaki* (point section). It is thought that this shape originated in the *kissaki moroha-zukuri* construction (double-edged point section) that came to Japan from Tang-dynasty China in the Nara period (8th century). The clear, serene steel and the narrow *hamon*, which glistens brightly, like a row of minute pearls, attest to the blade's fine raw materials and the superior technique used to make it. During the Kamakura period, this type of short blade was carried in a mounting without a *tsuba* (sword guard); because higher-ranking samurai carried such blades at the waist, they became known as *koshigatana* ("waist swords"). The mounting for this blade (cat. no. 130) is likewise finely made and is decorated with randomly scattered hollyhock *mon*, the insignia of the Tokugawa shogun family, in *maki-e* lacquer. The *tantō* was previously in the collection of the fourth Marquis Hosokawa (1883–1970), lord of Kumamoto domain.

WT

Yukimitsu

## 84.

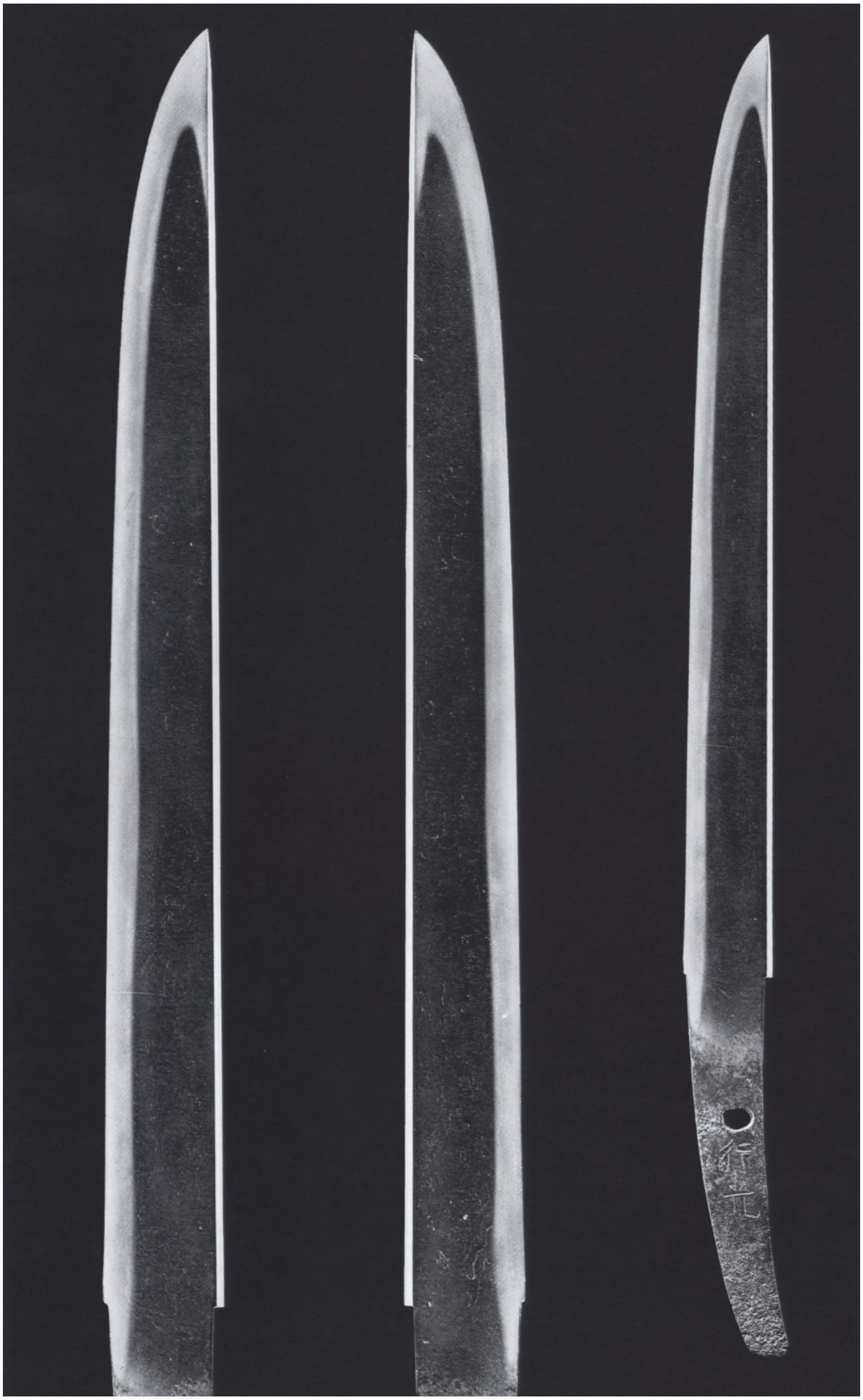
## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger)

## 国宝 短刀 行光

Kamakura period, 14th century
Steel
L. 26.2 cm (10⅜ in.); *uchi-zori* curvature
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 行光 YUKIMITSU
Tokyo National Museum
**National Treasure**

Yukimitsu is said to have been a pupil of Shintogo Kunimitsu (see cat. no. 83). The renowned swordsmith Masamune, who perfected what is referred to as the Sōshū style (see cat. no. 85), was in the same school. There are only five known pieces signed by Yukimitsu, all of them *tantō* (daggers). There are also *tachi* (longer slung swords) attributed to Yukimitsu, but they were all cut down from their original lengths (*ō-suriage*).

This *tantō* is reminiscent of the work of Kunimitsu, particularly its *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern), in which Kunimitsu specialized. There is only one known *suguha* blade by Masamune, whereas all of the signed work by Yukimitsu is *suguha*. The forging and *hamon* seen here are stylistically similar to that of Kunimitsu, but Yukimitsu's forging is stronger and more prominent than that of his teacher, and the *hamon* has more *nie* (visible crystals of steel). Indeed, the style of this blade can be seen as a bridge between that of Kunimitsu and the Sōshū tradition of Masamune. The *tantō* was preserved in the collection of the Maeda family. HK


行光

Attributed to Masamune

## 85.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword), known as "Nakatsukasa Masamune"

## 国宝 刀 名物 中務正宗

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Kamakura period, 14th century
Steel
L. 67.1 cm (26⅜ in.); curvature 1.7 cm (⅝ in.)
Unsigned; inlaid in gold on reverse of tang: 正宗本阿（花押）*MASAMUNE* [attributed by] *HON'AMI* (*kaō*);
inlaid in gold on obverse: 本多中務所持 *HONDA NAKATSUKASA SHOJI* (owned by Honda Nakatsukasa)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**National Treasure**

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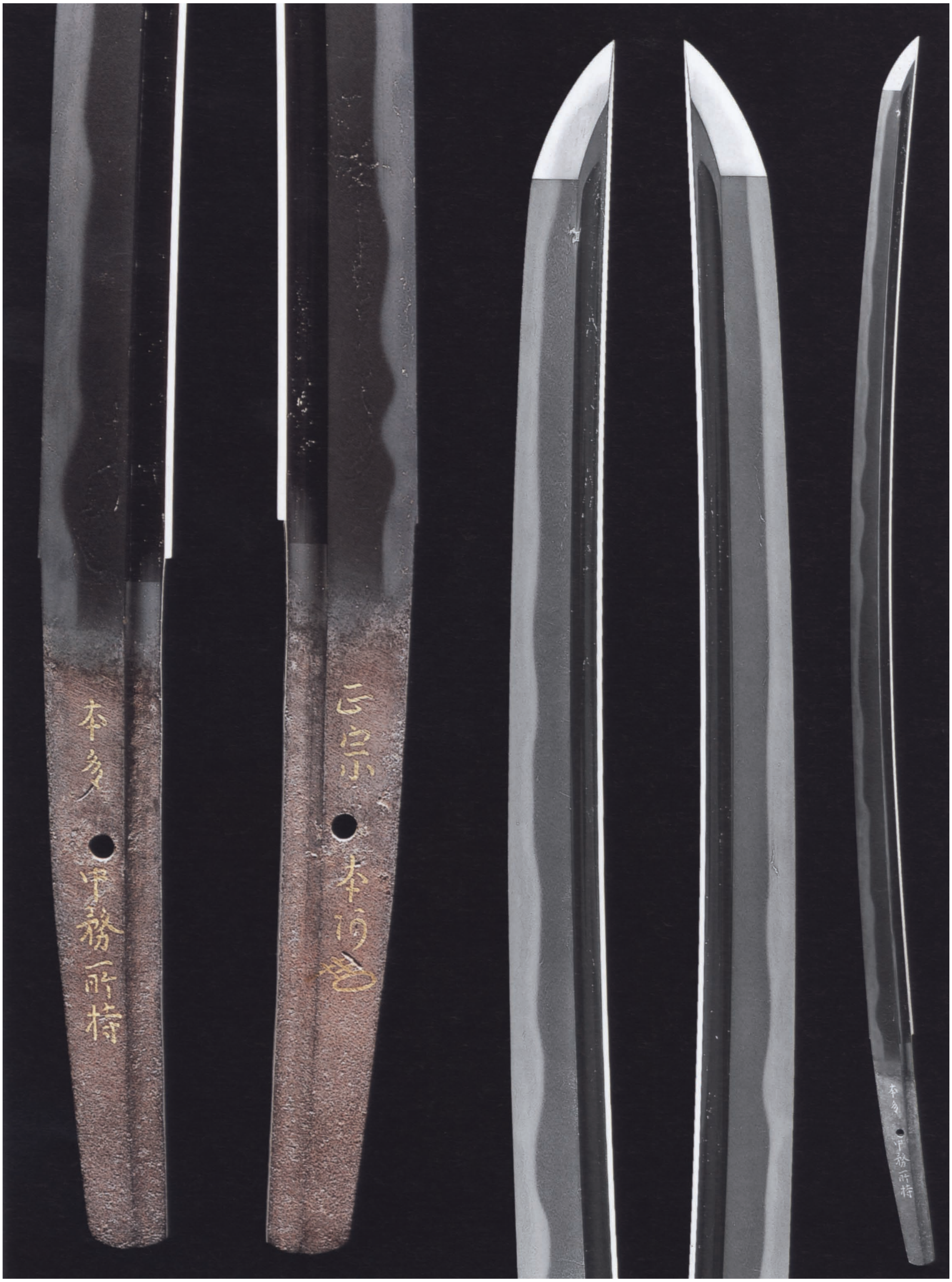
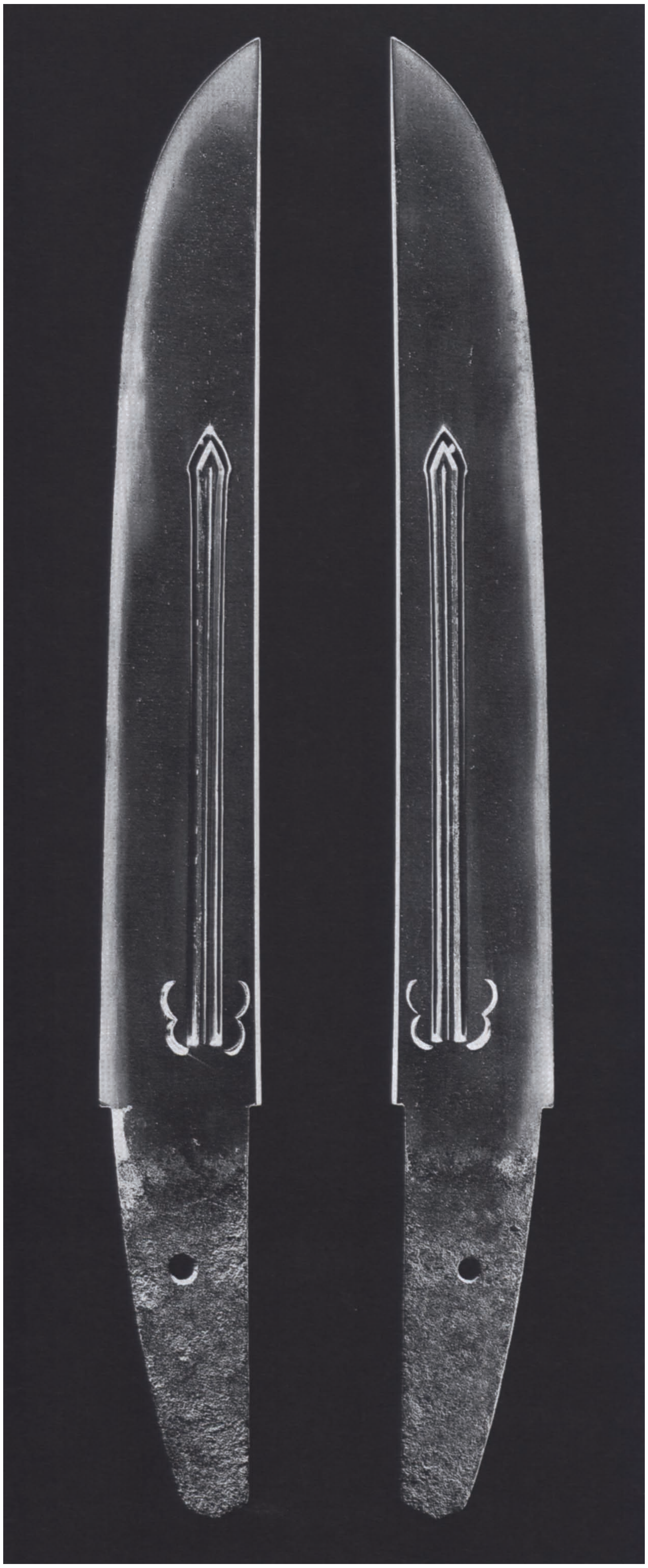
This blade is rather wide, with an extended *kissaki* (point section) and beautiful *itame-hada* (wood grain) forging. The *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *gunome* mixed with *notare* (compact, irregular patterns mixed with larger undulations) is rich in variations. The attributed maker of the blade, Masamune, was in the lineage of Shintogo Kunimitsu of Kamakura, in Sōshū province (see cat. no. 83). He perfected what is referred to as the Sōshū tradition, characterized by strong heat treatment, with a *hamon* (tempering pattern) reminiscent of powerful ocean waves. The "violence" of this aesthetic, which appealed to the tastes of the Kamakura samurai, also exerted a profound influence on swordsmiths throughout the rest of Japan.

This *katana*, a representative example of Masamune's work, is highly esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece." The *Umetada Meikan*, a catalogue of fine swords compiled between about 1605 and 1655, records that the inscriptions in gold on the tang were inlaid by Umetada Jusai in the eleventh year of the Keichō era (1606). The inscription includes the attribution to Masamune by Hon'ami Kōtoku and a reference to the sword's owner, Honda Heihachiro Tadakatsu (1548–1610), a close retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu (see cat. no. 11). It should be noted that the blade was originally made as a *tachi* and was later cut down and remounted as a *katana*. The attribution is thus on the obverse of the tang, as if it were a *tachi*, but it is on the reverse of a *katana*. IT


本多
中務所持
正宗
本阿
本多
中務所持



Attributed to Masamune

## 86.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger)

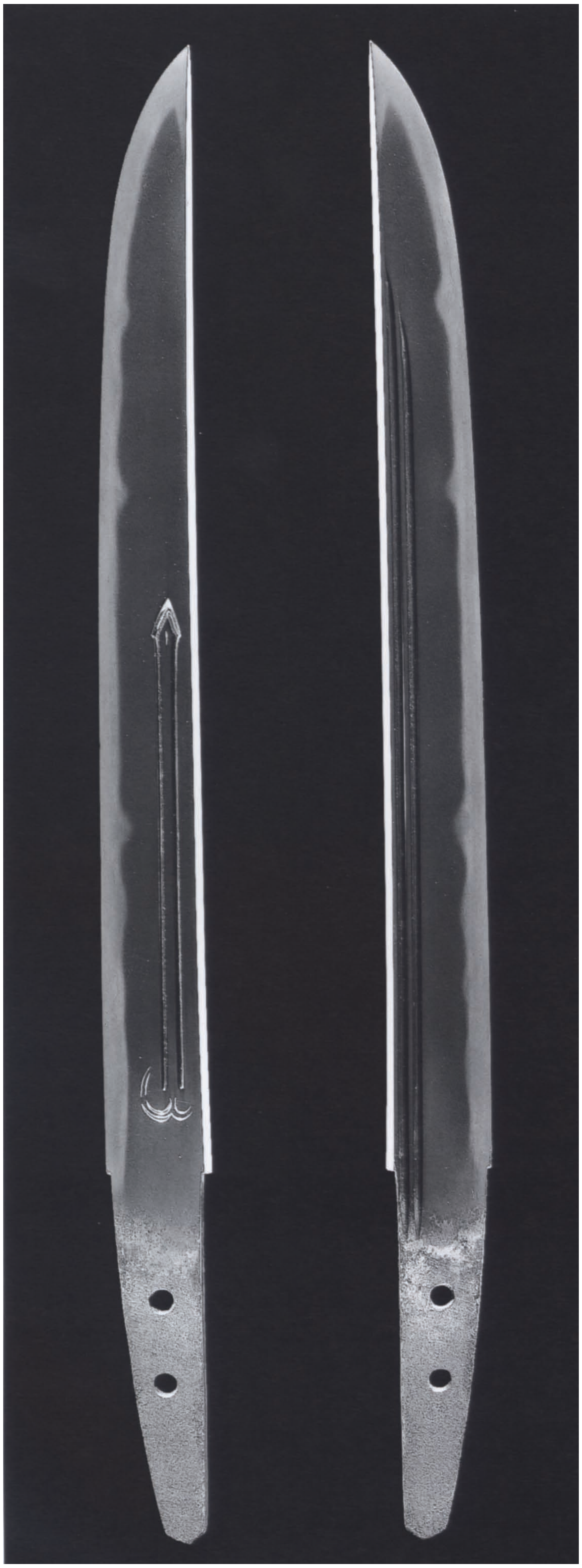
国宝 短刀 名物 包丁正宗

Kamakura period, 14th century
Steel
L. 24.1 cm (9½ in.); no curvature
Unsigned
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture
**National Treasure**

This superb blade is representative of the work of Masamune, one of the most renowned of all Japanese swordsmiths. Masamune was active in Kamakura, in Sagami province (in present-day Kanagawa Prefecture) during the late Kamakura period. Together with Awataguchi Yoshimitsu and Go no Yoshihiro, he is esteemed in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, an Edo-period catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordmakers, as one of the *Sansaku*, or "Three Famous Smiths," and indeed he has the largest number of blades recorded therein.

The distinctive shape of this type of *tantō*, which is exceedingly wide for its length, gave rise to the name "Hocho Masamune" (Kitchen Knife Masamune). Of the three blades so named in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, this is the longest. Esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece," it exemplifies Masamune's superior forging, which he inherited from Shintogo Kunimitsu, followed by Yukimitsu, and then perfected in what is known as the Sōshū style. The forging pattern is *itame* (wood grain), formed by mixing hard and soft steels, and is rich in *ji-nie* (visible crystals of steel in the flat area of the blade) with *chikei* (bright, short curving lines). The *hamon* (tempering pattern) is *gunome* mixed with *notare* (compact, irregular waves and broad undulations, respectively), has numerous *nie*, and is rich in variations, including areas of *nioi*, a tight, "snowlike" pattern comprising a crystalline structure in which the individual crystals of steel are not visible to the naked eye. *Nioi* is sometimes likened poetically to clusters of blossoms on distant cherry trees. The dagger was once in the possession of Tokugawa Ieyasu and after his death was preserved as an heirloom of the Owari Tokugawa family, established by Ieyasu's ninth son, Yoshinao (1600–1650).

HK



Attributed to Sadamune

### 87.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger), known as "Terasawa Sadamune"

国宝　短刀　名物　寺沢貞宗

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Kamakura–Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Steel
L. 29.4 cm (11⅝ in.); slight curvature
Unsigned
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**National Treasure**

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This *tantō* is *hira-zukuri* in form—flat and ridgeless—with only a slight curvature. It has exquisite *itame-hada* (wood grain forging) and a superb *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *notare* with *gunome* (broad undulations mixed with compact, irregular waves). A *suken*—a motif of a stand-alone *ken*-type sword (double-edged and straight), with traces of *vajra* hilt—is carved on the *omote* (obverse). On the *ura* (reverse) are *gomabashi*: two narrow parallel grooves representing the tongs used to make fire during the Goma-e rite of Shingon Buddhism, in which the deity Fudō Myōō is invoked. The blade is unsigned, but from its style it can be attributed to Sadamune, a pupil of the great Masamune (see cat. nos. 85, 86), and it is highly esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece."

Sadamune is believed to have been active from the late Kamakura into the Nanbokuchō period because his extant swords include examples of relatively slender, Kamakura-style blades as well as the long, broad sword typical of the Nanbokuchō period. This *tantō* (dagger) exhibits the Sōshū style of forging perfected by Masamune, although there are many other works by Sadamune with a more expressive forging and *hamon*. This piece is thus believed to represent a transitional style and to date from early in Sadamune's career. It is recorded in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordmakers published in the early eighteenth century, as the famous "Terasawa Sadamune," so named because it was owned by Terasawa Shima no kami, a close retainer of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the lord of Shimazu Castle in Hizen province (in present-day Saga and Nakasaki Prefectures). Shima no kami presented the dagger to the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada, who bequeathed it to Yorinobu of the Kishu Tokugawa family, in whose family it was handed down. IT

Attributed to Yoshihiro

### 88.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword), known as "Matsui Gō"

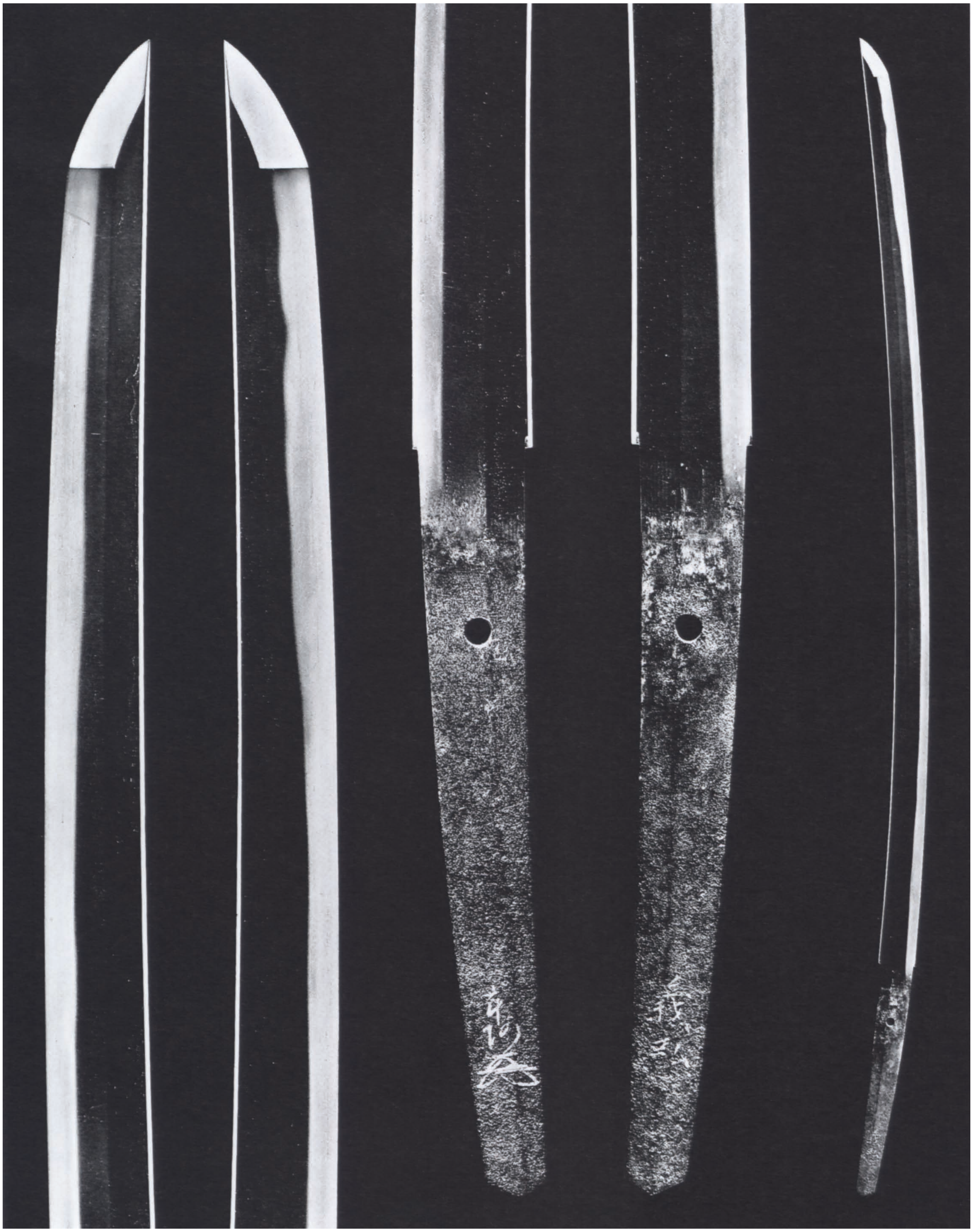
## 重要文化財 刀 名物 松井江

Kamakura period, 14th century
Steel
L. 69.4 cm (27⅜ in.); curvature 1.6 cm (⅝ in.)
Unsigned; attribution written in vermilion lacquer on reverse of tang: 義弘 *YOSHIHIRO*; written in vermilion lacquer on obverse: 本阿（花押） *HON'A* (*kaō*)
Sano Art Museum, Shizuoka Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

Many long *tachi*—blades carried with the cutting edge facing down—made before the fourteenth century were shortened beginning about the middle of the fifteenth century so that they could be carried as *katana*, which are worn thrust through the belt at the waist, with the cutting edge facing up. The vermilion-lacquer attribution on this sword was written by Hon'ami Kōjō (active 1667–97), an appraiser from the famous Hon'ami family who was retained by the Tokugawa *bakufu* (military government). When appraising a sword with no signature, the Hon'ami family usually inscribed those whose original tangs had been completely cut away (*ō-suriage*) in gold inlay; blades that retained even the smallest piece of the original tang were inscribed in vermilion lacquer, as seen here.

This sword is recorded as the "Matsui Gō" in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordmakers published in the early eighteenth century, during the Kyōhō era (1716–36). It was so named because the sword was once the possession of Matsui Sado (no) kami Okinaga (1582–1661), a retainer of the Hosokawa family, lords of Kumamoto domain. (The *uchigatana* mounting for it is still owned today by the Matsui family.) The swords included in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō* were selected by the Hon'ami family from among the swords owned by the daimyo and submitted to the *bakufu* and are thus highly esteemed as being *Kyōhō meibutsu* ("Kyōhō-era famous pieces"). This blade eventually passed to the family of the Tokugawa shoguns. In the second year of the Jōkyō era (1685), when Tsuruhime, daughter of the fifth Tokugawa shogun, Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), married Tokugawa Tsunanori, the third-generation lord of Kishu province, it was given by Tsunayoshi as a wedding present. At that time Hon'ami Kōjō valued the sword in an *origami* (evaluation paper) as *daikinsu nihyakumai*: worth two thousand gold *ryō*.

The Matsui Gō can be described as clear and bright, terms that are considered the highest praise for a Japanese sword. Among works by or attributed to Yoshihiro, this highly refined piece is unusual for being somewhat subdued, although the *hamon* (tempering pattern) does broaden toward the *kissaki* (point section). Yoshihiro was from Etchū province (present-day Toyama Prefecture) and is said to have gone to Kamakura, where he is reputed to have been one of the ten best pupils of the great Masamune (see cat. nos. 85, 86). In the *Kaifunki*, a sword book published in 1607, the refinement of his work is praised as being "as skillful as Masamune and not inferior to him." WT



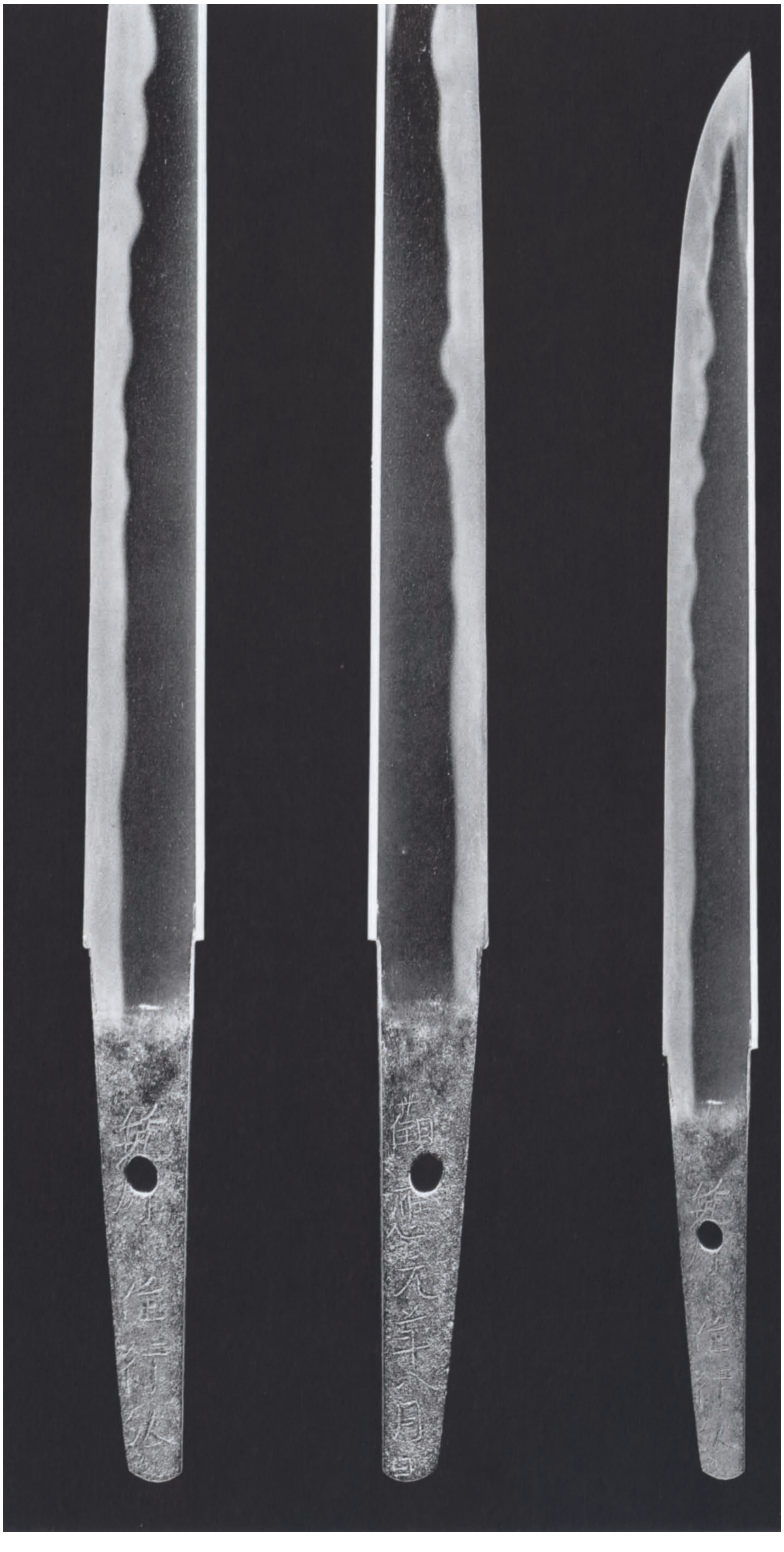
Yukihiro

**89.**

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger)

国宝 短刀 行弘

Nanbokuchō period, 1350
Steel
L. 23.5 cm (9¼ in.); no curvature
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 筑州住行弘
*CHIKUSHU (NO) JU YUKIHIRO*; inscribed on reverse:
観応元年八月日 *KANNŌ GANNEN HACHIGATSU HI*
(a day in the eighth month of the first year of the Kannō era [1350])
Tsuchiura City Museum, Ibaraki Prefecture
**National Treasure**



The smiths of Chikuzen province, in Kyūshū (the most southerly of Japan's four main islands), including such notable makers as Sairen and Jitsua, flourished during the Nanbokuchō period. Saemon Saburo, said to be Jitsua's son, is known as "Samonji" because he signed his works with the inscription "Sa," meaning "left." His sophisticated blades are characterized by *itame* (wood grain) forging with *chikei* (shiny, short curving lines) with a bright *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *gunome* mixed with *notare-ba* (compact waves and larger undulations). His works are thus very different from those of his father, which have a large, flowing *itame* with a *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) of "misty" *nioi-guchi*, a fine crystalline structure between the ridge and the tempering pattern.

Yukihiro, the maker of this blade, is said to have been a pupil of "Sa." Whereas the *tantō* made by Sa are almost all curved, those by Yukihiro have no curvature; however, Yukihiro's bright, clear *hamon* of *gunome* mixed with *notare-ba* is reminiscent of his teacher's work. This *tantō* was presented as a wedding gift by Matsudaira Wakasa no kami Yasunobu, lord of Sasayama Castle, in Tamba province (in present-day Kyōto and Hyōgo Prefectures), whose daughter, Kiuko, married Naomasa, the second-generation lord of the Tsuchiya family of Tsuchiura domain (present-day Tsuchiura City, Ibaraki Prefecture). It was passed down in the Tsuchiya family. HK

Moritsugu

## 90.

# Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

重要文化財 太刀 守次

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Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Steel
L. 86 cm (33⅞ in.); curvature 3.2 cm (1¼ in.)
Inscribed and dated on obverse of tang:
備中国住守次作 *BITCHŪ (NO) KUNI JŪ MORITSUGU SAKU*; 延文二年十二月日 *ENBUN NINEN JŪNIGATSU HI*
(a day in the twelfth month of the second year of the Enbun era [1367])
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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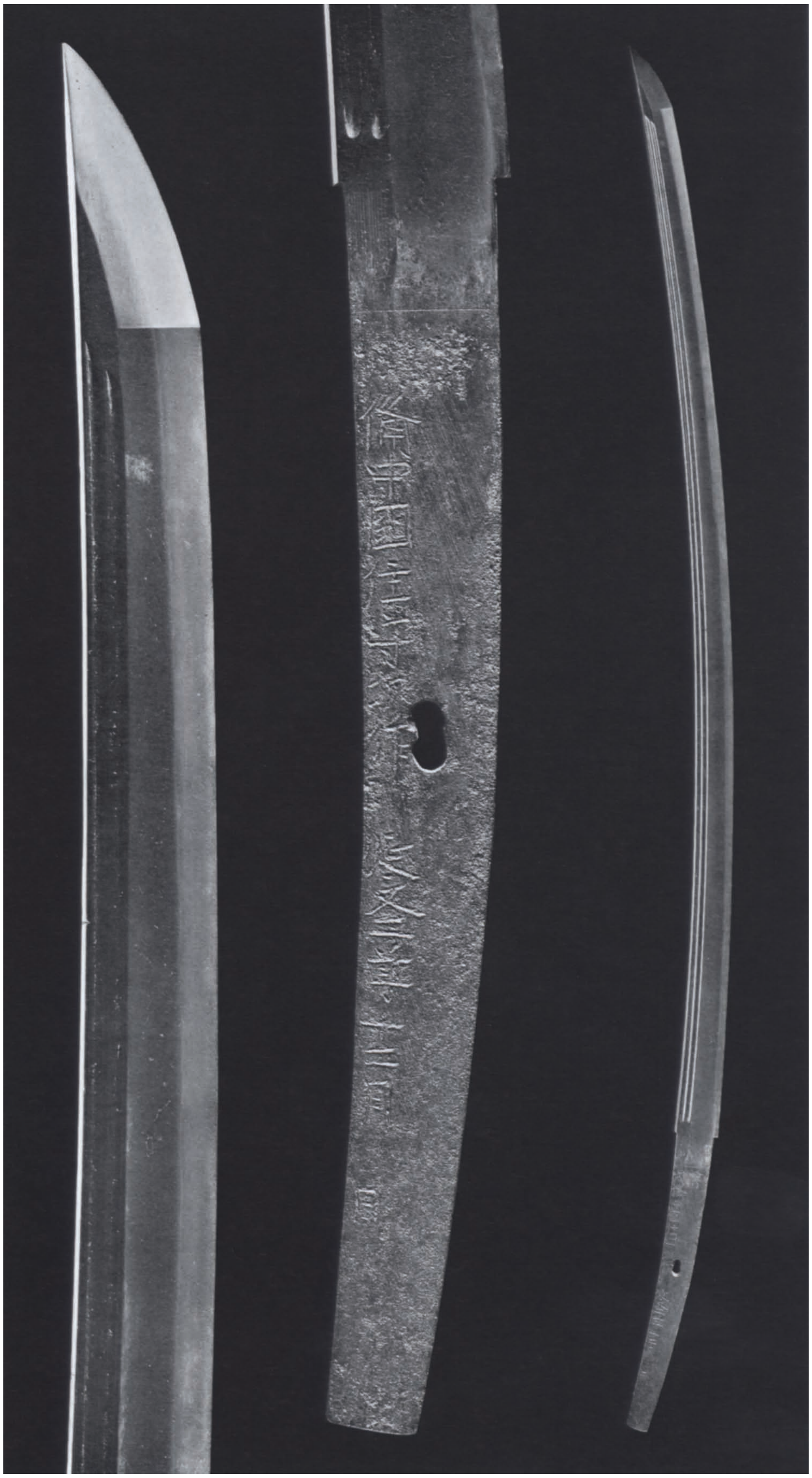


Long *tachi* with an extended *kissaki* (point section), such as the sword by Osafune Tomomitsu (cat. no. 91), were fashionable during the Nanbokuchō period. This example has a typical Nanbokuchō-period shape. The maker, Moritsugu, lived in Aoe, in Bitchū province (present-day Kurashiki City, in Okayama Prefecture). Although that name was in continuous use from the Heian through the Kamakura periods, it is not known whether all of the smiths who used it were of the same bloodline.

The smiths who worked in Aoe from the Heian to the middle Kamakura period are differentiated by the dates when they were active (see cat. no. 75). The swords made in each of those periods also have their own distinctive characteristics. Smiths from the Nanbokuchō period are called the *Sue*-Aoe ("Late" Aoe), for example, and their blades have a *hamon* (tempering pattern) either of *chōji-midare* (clove shapes in compact, irregular patterns) with *saka-chōji* (sloping *chōji*) or a tight and narrow *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern). This sword is typical of the latter type.

HK

Tomomitsu

## 91.

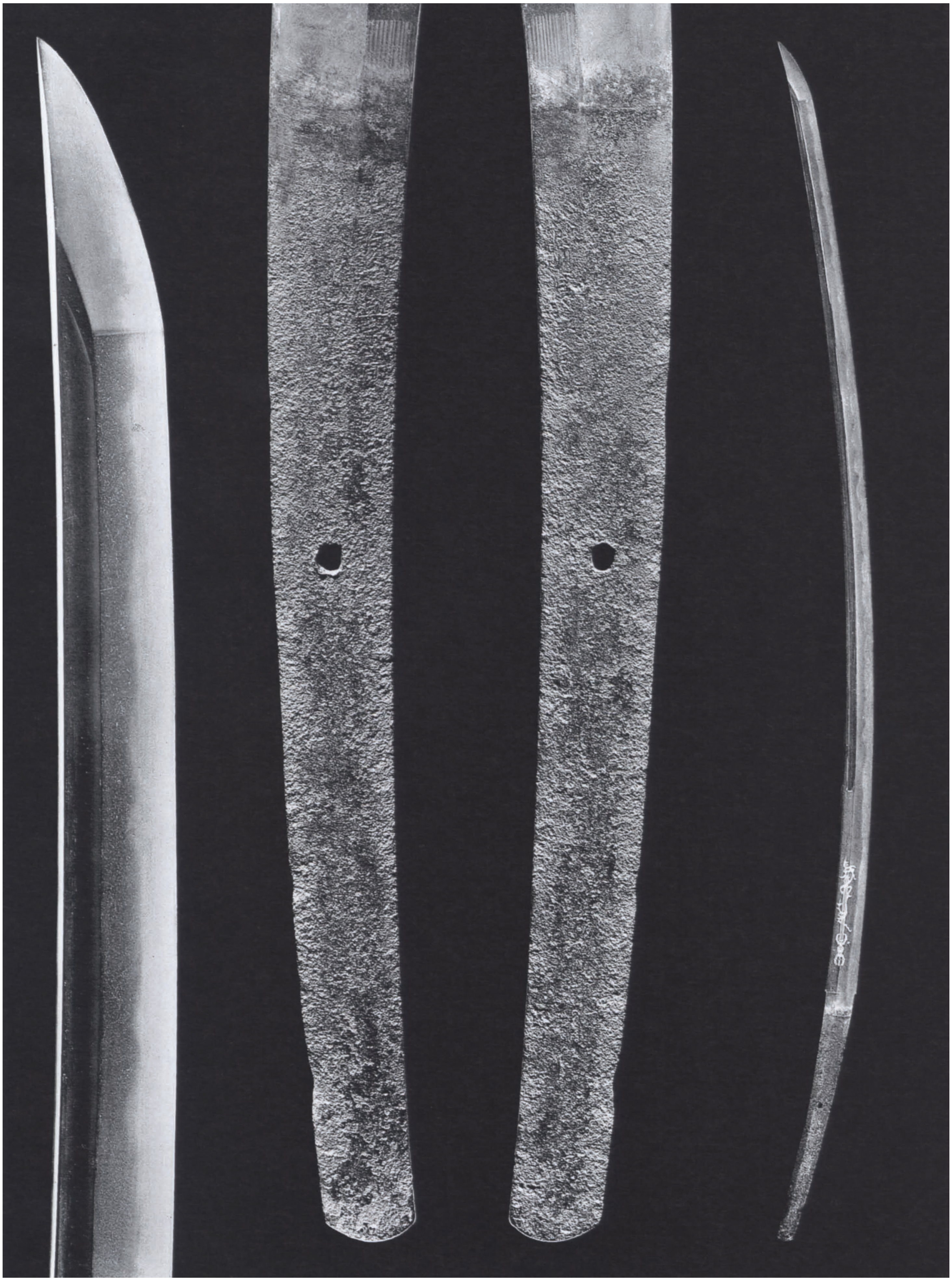
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 国宝 太刀 倫光

Nanbokuchō period, 1366
Steel
L. 126 cm (49⅝ in.); curvature 5.8 cm (2¼ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 備州長船倫光 *BISHŪ OSAFUNE TOMOMITSU*; dated on reverse: 貞治五年二月日 *JŌJI GONEN NIGATSU HI* (a day in the second month of the fifth year of the Jōji era [1366])
Nikkō Futarasan-jinja Shrine, Tochigi Prefecture
**National Treasure**

During the Kamakura period, the average length of *tachi* was about 75 to 80 centimeters. This average increased during the Nanbokuchō period, reaching a peak in about the Enbun (1356–61) and Jōji (1362–67) eras, when this blade was made. Extant swords of this length are rare: a signed *tachi* by Bitchū Aoe Moritsugu that is dated 1367 (cat. no. 90) is 86 centimeters long, while a blade by Osafune Kanemitsu—who was the teacher of Tomomitsu, the maker of this blade—is 93 centimeters long. Nanbokuchō-period *tachi* were so long, in fact, that during the Momoyama and Edo periods they were often cut down from the tang and carried as *katana* (see, e.g., cat. no. 92). As a result, very few survive that are *ubu*—that is, they retain their full original length—and tangs rarely retain a signature. This blade is thus extraordinary for being not only *ubu*, but one of the longest known examples and a finely made one at that.

Tomomitsu was a fourth-generation Osafune smith and the son of Kagemitsu (see cat. no. 80). As noted above, he was a disciple of Kanemitsu, as were the smiths Motomitsu, Moromitsu, and Masamitsu. Judging from Tomomitsu's style, he was the closest to the master. The unbroken *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *gunome* mixed with *chōji* (irregular waves and clove shapes) on a sword of such length indicates a particularly masterful technique. HK



Attributed to Hasebe Kunishige

## 92.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword), known as "Heshi-Kiri Hasebe"

## 国宝 刀 名物 へし切長谷部

---

Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Steel
L. 64.9 cm (25½ in.); curvature 0.9 cm (⅜ in.)
Attribution inlaid in gold on reverse of tang:
長谷部国重 本阿(花押) *HASABE KUNISHIGE HON'A*
(*kaō*); 黒田筑前守 *KURODA CHIKUZEN (NO) KAMI*
Fukuoka City Museum
**National Treasure**

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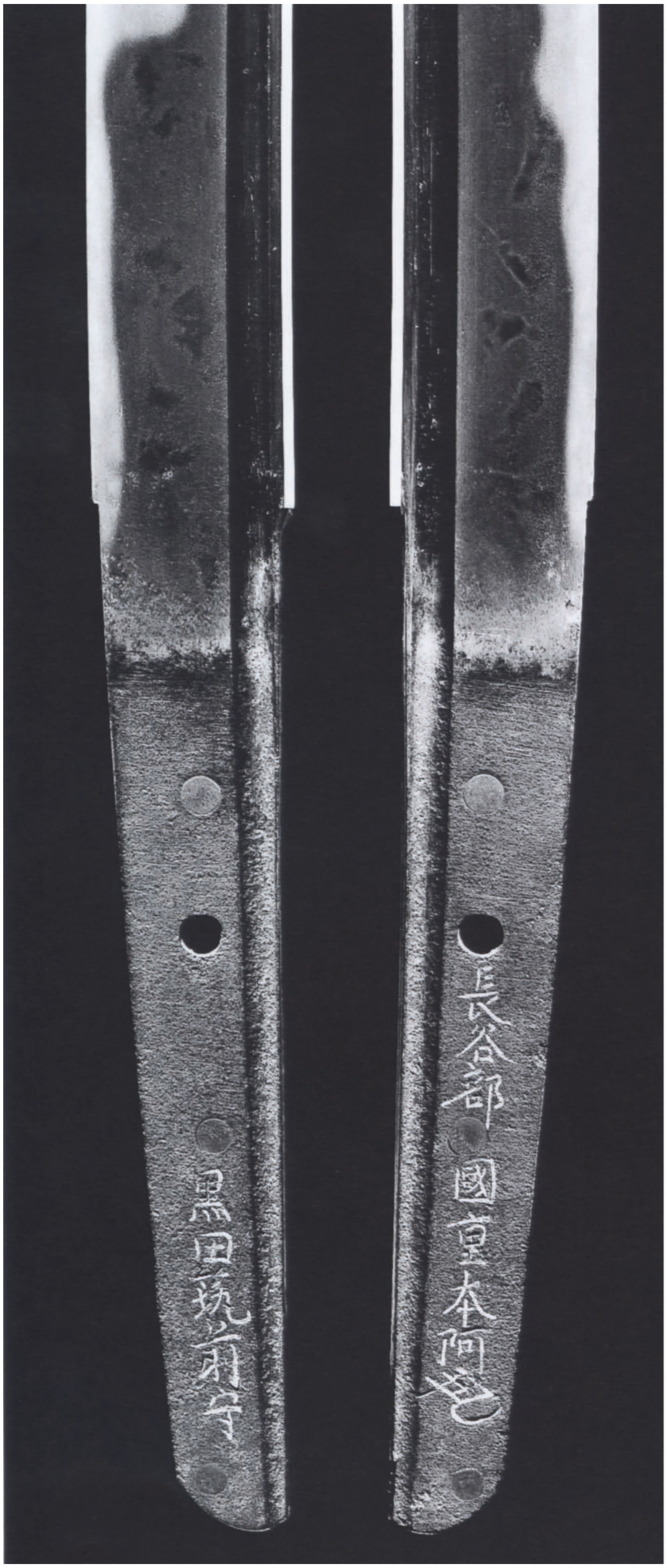
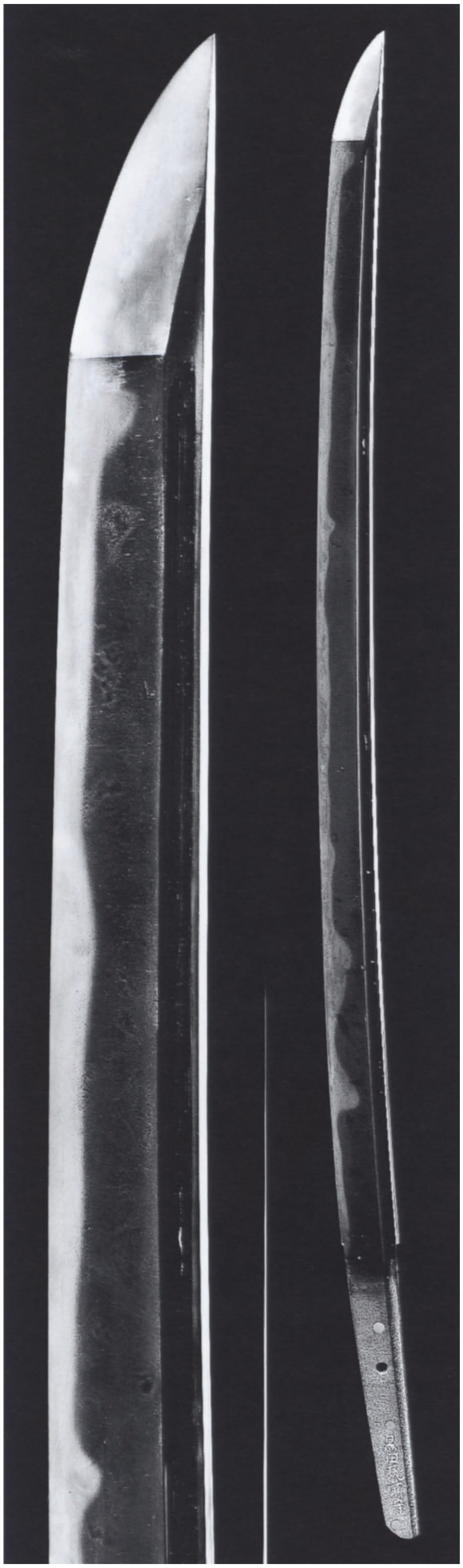
The Nobukuni and Hasebe schools were two of the leading groups of swordsmiths active in Kyōto during the Nanbokuchō period. According to the *Ojakusho*, a Muromachi-period book on swords, the Hasebe were numbered among the Yamato (Nara) smiths, a description also found in another historical sword book, the seventeenth-century *Kokon Meizukushi*. They were Kyōto smiths according to the Hon'ami family of sword appraisers, however. The Hasebe school was founded by Kunishige, said to have been a pupil of the renowned smith Masamune. He was followed by Kuninobu, active from the Enbun era (1356–61) to the Jōji era (1362–67). Both specialized in the *hitatsura hamon*, in which tempering effects can be seen across the blade, akin to the work of Sōshū Hiromitsu and Akihiro. It should be noted that there are signed blades by the Kamakura smith Shintogo Kunimitsu (see cat. no. 83) with the family name "Hasebe" in the inscription, so it could be conjectured that Kunishige adopted the "Hasebe" name from the Shintogo lineage.

This sword is recorded in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, an eighteenth-century catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordsmiths, with the name "Heshi-Kiri Hasebe." Long considered the masterpiece of Hasebe Kunishige, it was owned by the great warrior Oda Nobunaga and is highly esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece." According to lore, Nobunaga was once slighted by a serving man in priest's attire at a tea ceremony, and when the man attempted to escape reprisal by hiding under a low table, Nobunaga, wielding this blade, cut through the table to kill him. Nobunaga gave the sword to "Hashiba Chikuzen"—later to become the equally renowned warrior Toyotomi Hideyoshi—who in turn gave it to Kuroda Yoshitaka, in whose family it was passed down. The gold-inlaid inscription is that of Kōtoku, a famed sword polisher and appraiser of the Hon'ami family.

HK


黒田筑前守
長谷部國重本阿



Attributed to Shizu

### 93.

## Blade for a *tantō* (dagger), known as "Togawa Shizu"

短刀 名物 戸川志津

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Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Steel
L. 27 cm (10½ in.); slight curvature
Unsigned
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

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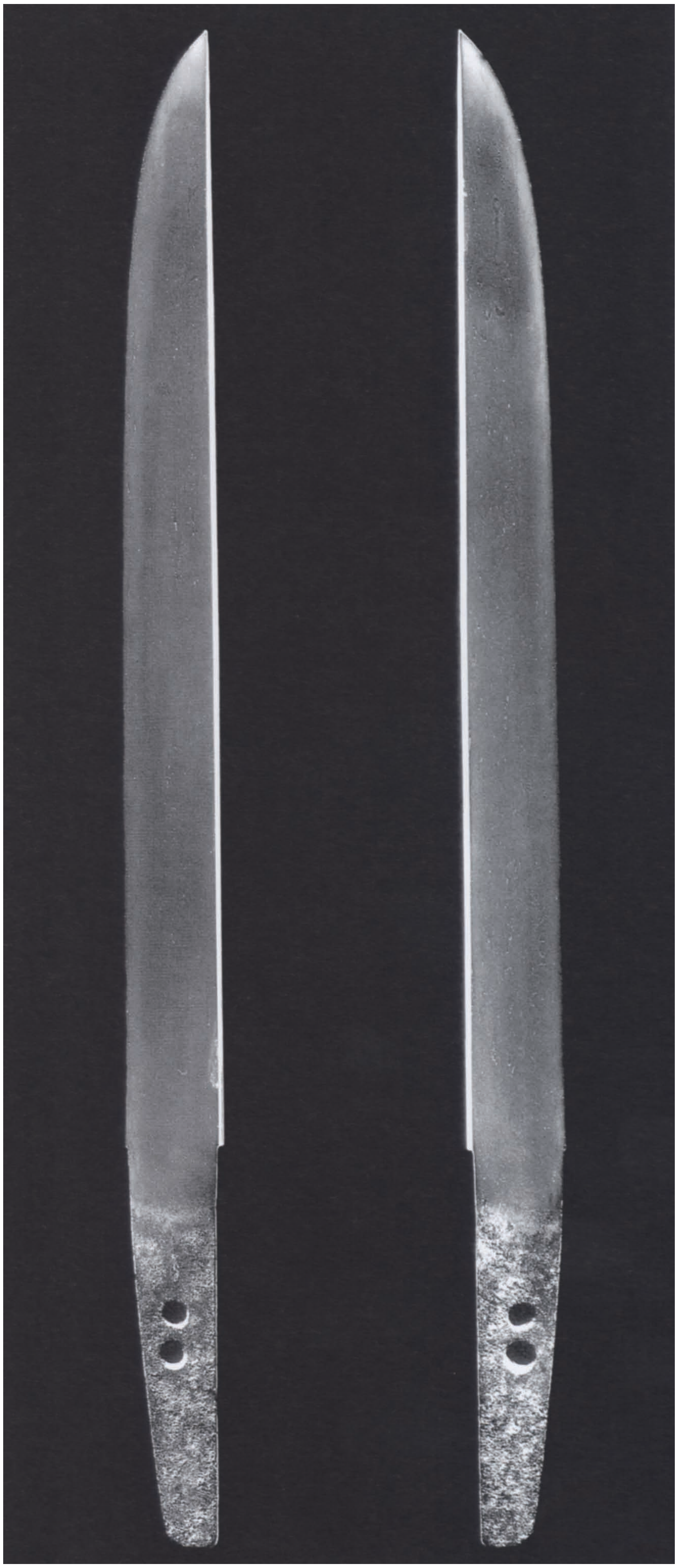
The name "Shizu" given to the swordsmith Kaneuji refers to the town he migrated to in Mino province (present-day Gifu Prefecture). Originally of the Tegai school, in Yamato, he later studied under the great Masamune in Sōshū (see cat. no. 86). Numerous smiths succeeded Kaneuji in Mino, flourishing there to the extent that, by the end of the Muromachi period, the majority of all smiths in Japan worked in Mino, and almost all of them used *kane* (after Kaneuji) as the first character of their name. There are only four signed *tachi* and three signed *tantō* by Kaneuji. One of the *tachi* is in the Yamato style; the others have *itame-hada* (wood grain forging) and a predominantly *notare hamon* (tempering pattern with broad undulations) with strong *nie* (visible crystals of steel), reflecting Masamune's influence.

This *tantō* is recorded in the Edo-period *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordsmiths, as the "Togawa Shizu." The name derives from a former owner, Togawa Tatsuyasu, an important retainer of Ukita Hideie, daimyo of Mimasaka, in Bizen province. Highly esteemed as being *meibutsu*, or a "famous piece," it was bought by Maeda Toshinaga and was later given by Toshinaga's son Toshitsune to the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada (1579–1632), when the latter visited the Maeda house. It was eventually transferred to the Kii Tokugawa family and given by them to the Owari Tokugawa clan.

HK



Yasumitsu

## 94.
## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)
## 重要文化財 太刀 康光

---

Muromachi period, 15th century
Steel
L. 82.9 cm (32⅝ in.); curvature 3 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 康光 YASUMITSU
Kakegawa-jinja Shrine, Kochi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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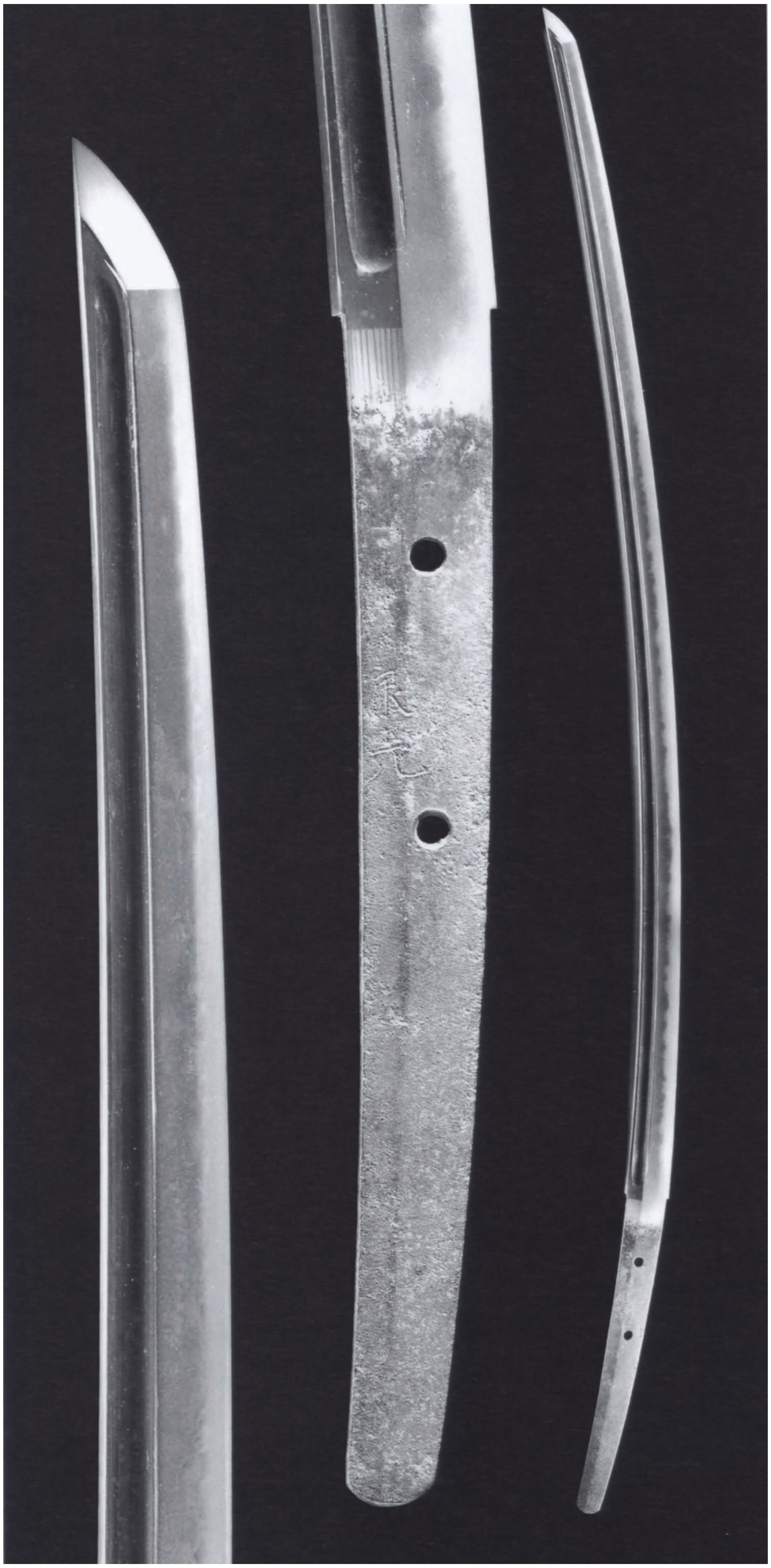
The smiths of Bizen province (in present-day Okayama Prefecture), who prospered from the Heian through the Muromachi period, counted numerous great artists among their ranks. Representative of the Bizen smiths working in the town of Osafune during the early Muromachi period are Morimitsu and Yasumitsu, who are known, together with smiths such as Iesuke and Tsuneie, as the "Ōei Bizen" because they were active during the Ōei era (1394–1428).

Fifty years before Yasumitsu was active—about the middle of the Nanbokuchō period—the extremely long swords known as *ōdachi* ("great" *tachi*) were fashionable. By the Muromachi period they had disappeared, and the more moderate shape of the late Kamakura period had returned. This *tachi* is typical of the blades being made at that time, with its somewhat long but beautifully shaped, deep curve. The forging is *itame* (wood grain) with *utsuri*, a reflective, "misty" band parallel to the *hamon* (tempering pattern), which is *notare* mixed with *gunome* (broad undulations and smaller, irregular waves and mounds). Whereas *gunome-midare* had been the dominant style of *hamon* for the Osafune smiths during the late Kamakura period, the blades made by the Ōei Bizen differ in that many have a *hamon* of *gunome* or *notare*. This example is preserved in the Kakegawa-jinja, the shrine that venerates Kazutoyo, the ancestor-founder of the Yamauchi family of Kochi Prefecture.

HK



Ukyo no suke Katsumitsu and
Sakyo no shin Munemitsu

### 95.

## Blade for a *wakizashi* (short sword)

重文 脇差 勝光·宗光

---

Muromachi period, 1487
Steel
L. 53.6 cm (21⅛ in.); curvature 1.4 cm (½ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 備前国住長船勝光宗光備中於草壁庄作 *BIZEN (NO) KUNI JU OSAFUNE KATSUMITSU MUNEMITSU BITCHŪ KUSAKABE NI OITE TSUKURU*; inscribed on reverse: 文明十七年二月日 *BUNMEI JUKYUNEN NIGATSU KICHIJITSU* (an auspicious day in the second month of the nineteenth year of the Bunmei era [1487])
Nikkō Tōshōgū, Tochigi Prefecture

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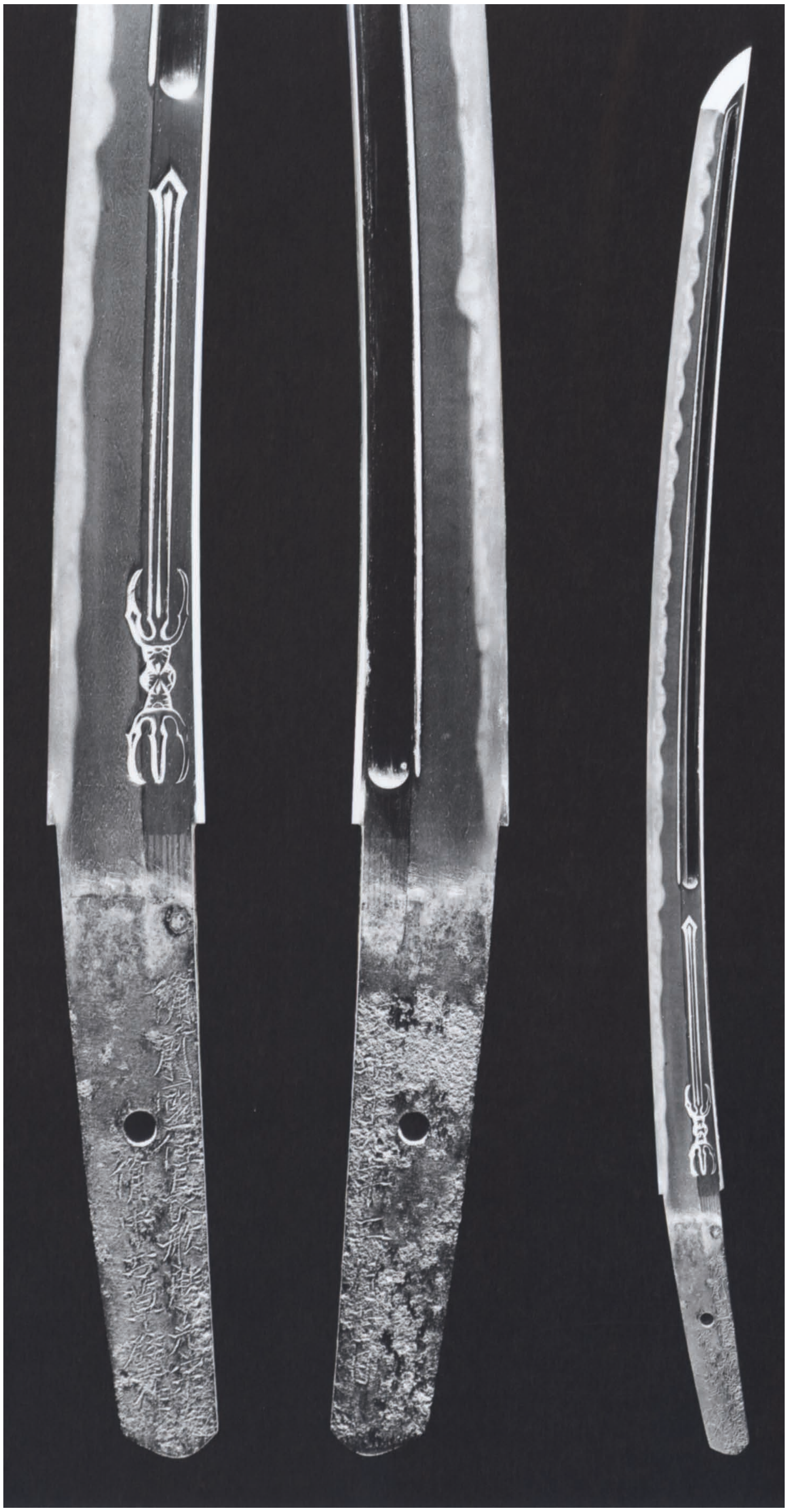

During the early Muromachi period, it was still customary to carry swords in the *tachi* style: suspended from the waist with the cutting edge facing down. Beginning about the middle of the period it became fashionable to wear swords of about 60 centimeters in length thrust through the belt, with the cutting edge facing up. Many *wakizashi*, or short swords—between 30 and 60 centimeters in length—were produced at that time. This example was made jointly by two brothers, Ukyo no suke Katsumitsu and Sakyo no shin Munemitsu, who along with Tadamitsu are considered repesentative of the Osafune smiths active then. Another joint work by them is dated 1471 and inscribed with their ages (Katsumitsu is thirty-seven and Munemitsu is thirty-five), letting us extrapolate that when they made this sword Katsumitsu was fifty-three and Munemitsu was fifty-one.

This *wakizashi* is typical of joint efforts by the brothers, with its *itame* (wood grain) forging and *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *gunome* and *ko-chōji* (irregular waves and small clove shapes), with many *ashi* and *yō* (notches and isolated spots). It was carried by Tokugawa Ieyasu in a lacquered *nashiji koshigatana* mounting (cat. no. 124) with no *tsuba* (sword guard). After Ieyasu's death, the sword was deposited in the Nikkō Tōshōgū, the shrine where he is buried. HK

Muramasa

### 96.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword)

### 刀 村正

---

Muromachi period, 16th century
Steel
L. 68.8 cm (27⅛ in.); curvature 1.8 cm (¾ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 村正 MURAMASA
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

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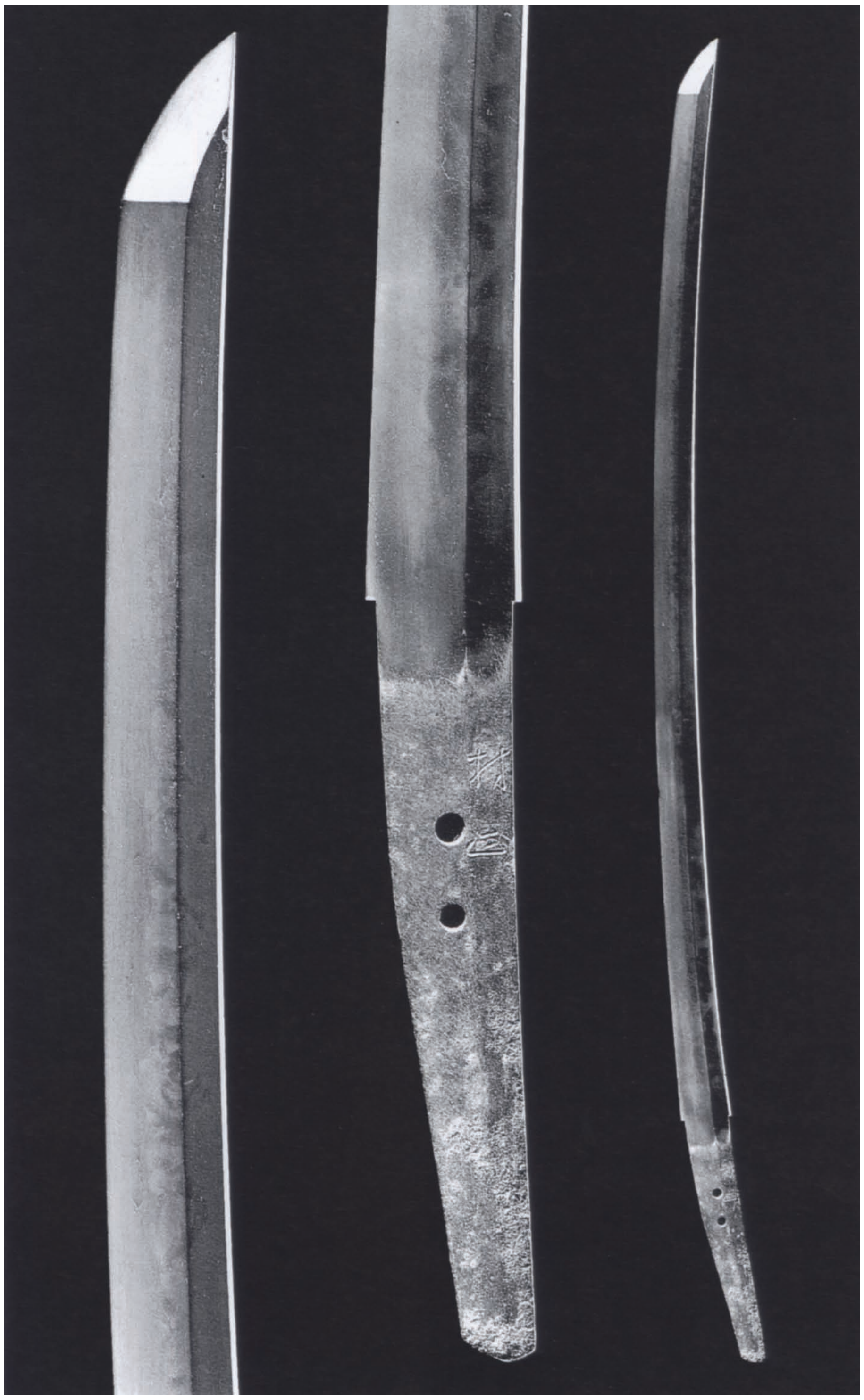

At the end of the Muromachi period (late 16th century), the provinces of Japan were controlled by powerful military commanders who fought frequently in order to guard or expand upon their territories. The swords of the time were made light and short so that they could be wielded with one hand. This is a typical blade of the period. Its maker, Muramasa, lived in Ise province (in present-day Mie Prefecture), but there are actually works signed "Muramasa" dating from 1501 to 1576, suggesting that perhaps three generations of smiths used the same name.

During the Edo period swords by Muramasa were believed to be unlucky for the Tokugawa house because the sword used to kill the father of Tokugawa Ieyasu was made by Muramasa, as was the *tantō* with which Ieyasu's son Nobuyasu committed *seppuku* (ritual suicide by cutting open the stomach). Ieyasu himself was accidentally injured while examining a *yari* (spear) by Muramasa. Because of the ill omen associated with blades by Muramasa, many daimyo would not keep them. This one, owned by Ieyasu, was received from the Suruga house and was passed to the Owari Tokugawa house founded by Yoshinao, one of Ieyasu's sons. A record of the Owari Tokugawa family tells that the sword had a "defect," probably an allusion to the bad luck associated with the blade, and thus should be destroyed since it could not be used. A prominent feature of Muramasa's blades is the matching *hamon* (tempering pattern) on both the *omote* (obverse) and *ura* (reverse). This example is a rarity among Muramasa's blades in that it has a *hitatsura hamon*, in which tempering effects can be seen across the entire surface.

HK

Magoroku Kanemoto

## 97.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword), known as “Daisen Kanemoto”

## 刀 号：大仙兼元

---

Muromachi period, 16th century
Steel
L. 76.9 cm (30¼ in.); curvature 1.8 cm (¾ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 兼元 KANEMOTO
Fukuoka City Museum

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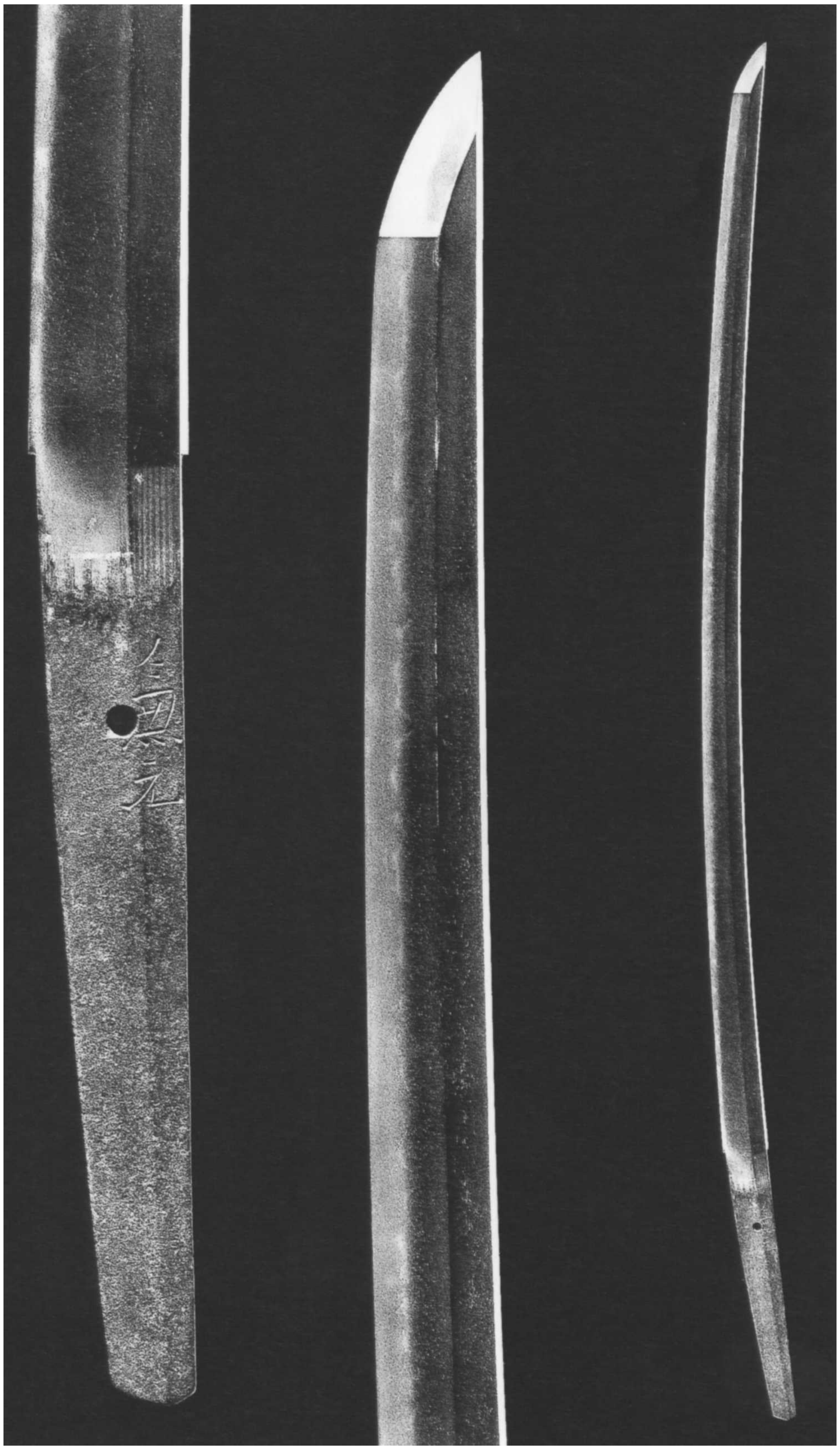
The smiths of Mino province evolved from a lineage established by Kaneuji, who migrated there from Yamato during the Kamakura period (see cat. no. 93). They peaked in activity during the late Muromachi period, when two of the school’s representative smiths were Izumi no kami Kanesada and Kanemoto. The Kanemoto school continued for a number of generations, the most famous being the second, Magoroku—the maker of this blade—known as “Seki no Magoroku” after the Seki region where many of the Mino smiths lived (the first-generation Kanemoto lived not in Seki but in nearby Akasaka).

Swords by Magoroku were held to be of superior cutting efficacy and were thus rated at the highest level in Edo-period lists of *waza-mono* (swords that cut well). His distinctive *hamon* (tempering pattern) consists of a sawtooth succession of pointed *gunome* (irregular waves) with a larger *gunome* at every third fluctuation: a pattern known as *sanbon-sugi* (triple cryptomeria), as seen here. This blade is rather long for a sword by Magoroku Kanemoto. Passed down in the Kuroda family, it is referred to as the “Daisen Kanemoto,” but the origin of the name “Daisen” is unclear. HK



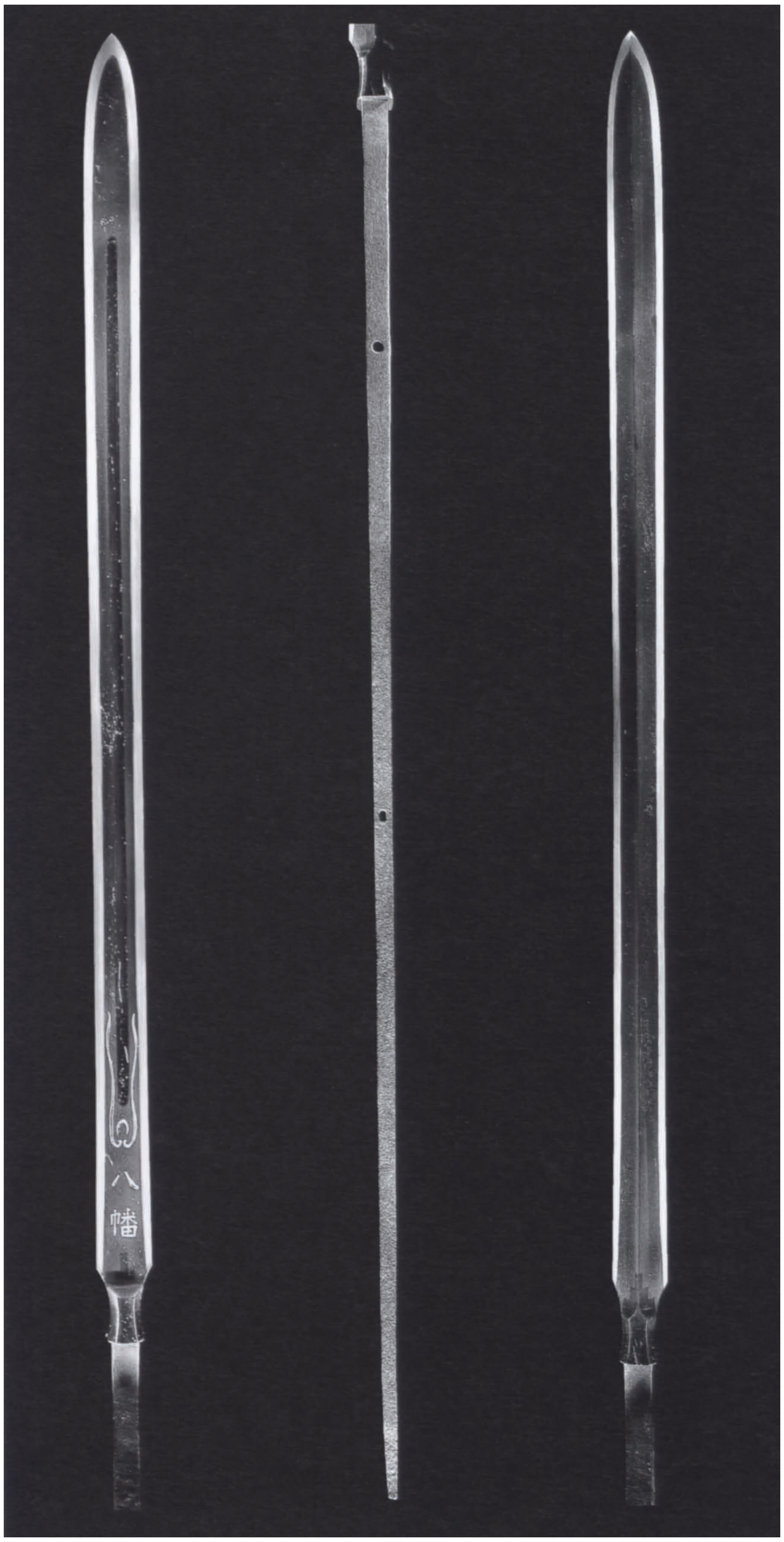
Kanehisa

### 98.

## Blade for an *ōmi (no) yari* (long-bladed spear)

## 大身槍　兼久

Muromachi period, 1562
Steel
L. 77.9 cm (30⅝ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 濃州関住兼久作 *NŌSHŪ SEKI JŪ KANEHISA SAKU*; dated on reverse: 永禄五年五月吉日 *EIROKU GONEN GOGATSU KICHIJITSU* (an auspicious day in the fifth month in the fifth year of the Eiroku era [1562]); 服部半蔵正就 *HATTORI HANZŌ MASANARI*
Tokyo National Museum



Stabbing weapons such as the *yari*, a type of spear, were first employed in Japan about the middle Yayoi period, or roughly the beginning of the Christian era. Although they are believed to have also been used during the Heian period, when the curved Japanese sword was perfected, few examples remain from either the Heian or the Kamakura periods, and signed *yari* are limited to works by Rai Kunitsugu, of the Rai school in Kyōto, and Daishinbo, of the Sōshū school. They start to appear in greater numbers during the Muromachi period, at the beginning of the Sengoku-jidai, or "Age of Wars" (ca. 1467–1568), a period of continuous military conflict during which the main weapons used were the bow and the spear.

There were various shapes and sizes of *yari*. The most common was the *sankaku-yari* ("triangular" *yari*), which, as its name suggests, has a blade that is triangular in section, as seen in the present example. The *kama-yari* ("sickle" *yari*) has blades that branch off to the left and right; the *jumonji-yari* ("cruciform" *yari*) has an additional horizontal blade that forms a cross; and the *sasaho-yari*, a form of *sugu-yari* ("straight" *yari*), has a blade in the form of a bamboo leaf.

This *yari* was owned by Masanari, son of Hattori Hanzō Masashige, a bodyguard and intelligence officer for Tokugawa Ieyasu. It was made by the smith Kanehisa of Seki, a village in Mino province (present-day Gifu Prefecture). During the late Muromachi period Seki had the highest concentration of swordsmiths of any center in Japan, and numerous *yari* were made there. This example, which is extremely long for a Japanese *yari*—and thus is known as an *ōmi (no) yari*, or "long-bladed *yari*"—has a *gunome hamon* (tempering pattern with irregular waves) with conspicuous *togari-ba* ("pointed" *gunome*) in typical Muromachi-period Mino style. HK

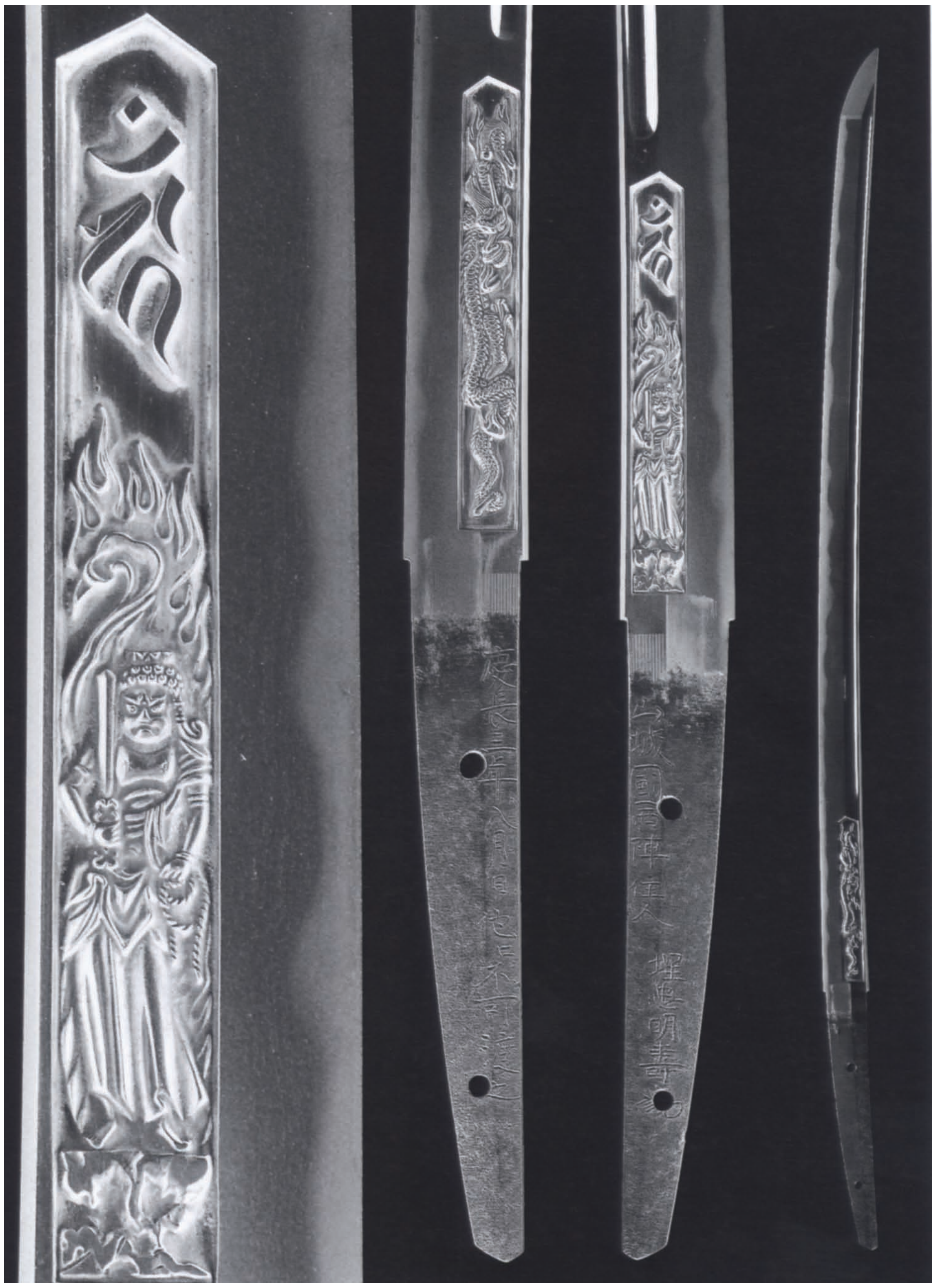
Umetada Myōju

## 99.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword)

## 重要文化財 刀 埋忠明寿

Momoyama period, 1598
Steel
L. 64.7 cm (25½ in.); curvature 0.9 cm (⅜ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 山城国西陣住人埋忠明寿（花押） *YAMASHIRO (NO) KUNI NISHIJIN JŪNIN UMETADA MYŌJU* (*kaō*); dated and inscribed on reverse: 慶長三年八月日 *KEICHŌ SANNEN HACHI GATSU HI* (a day in the eighth month of the third year of the Keichō era [1598]); 他江不可渡之 *TA E KORE (WO) WATASU BEKARAZU* (this sword should not be given to another)
Kyoto National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**



The swordsmith Umetada Myōju lived in Nishijin in Yamashiro province, part of present-day Kyōto Prefecture. His extant works include many excellent *tsuba* (sword guards) as well as carvings on blades. He also introduced a new style of sword—characterized by luminous steel and a bright *hamon*—and is thus known as one of the ancestor-founders of the *shintō* ("new sword") smiths. Together with Kunihiro, he is said to have been one of the two mainstays of swordmaking in the Momoyama period. Among his pupils were Tadayoshi of Hizen province (see cat. no. 100) and Teruhiru of Geishū province (present-day Hiroshima Prefecture).

Although this broad, shallow-curved sword is called a *katana*, it is boldy inscribed in the *tachi* style (*tachi-mei*), in which the signature of the smith is on the *omote* (obverse)—meaning the surface that would face out if it were worn with the cutting edge down; the date is on the *ura* (reverse). Indeed, this sword was made to resemble a Nanbokuchō-period *tachi* that was later cut down to be used as a *katana*. The *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *ō-notare* mixed with *ō-midare* (large waves or undulations mixed with large irregular patterns) about the middle of the blade is reminiscent of the work of the great fourteenth-century smith Kaneuji (see cat. no. 93). Both the *omote* and *ura* are decorated on the lower part of the blade, just above the *hamachi* (a notch on the cutting edge where the tang begins) with finely carved panels sculpted in *ukibori* (sunken relief). On the obverse is the Buddhist deity Fudō Myōō in flames together with a Sanskrit character; on the reverse is a dragon. Both are masterpieces of carving whose power is unsurpassed by the works of any of the period's leading artists. IT

Tadayoshi

## 100.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword)

## 刀 忠吉

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Momoyama period, early 17th century
Steel
L. 68.2 cm (26⅞ in.); curvature 1.8 cm (¾ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 肥前国忠吉
*HIZEN NO KUNI TADAYOSHI*; inscribed on reverse:
同国剞物宗長 *DOKOKU HORIMONO MUNENAGA*
Tokyo National Museum
Given by Kanno Masaaki

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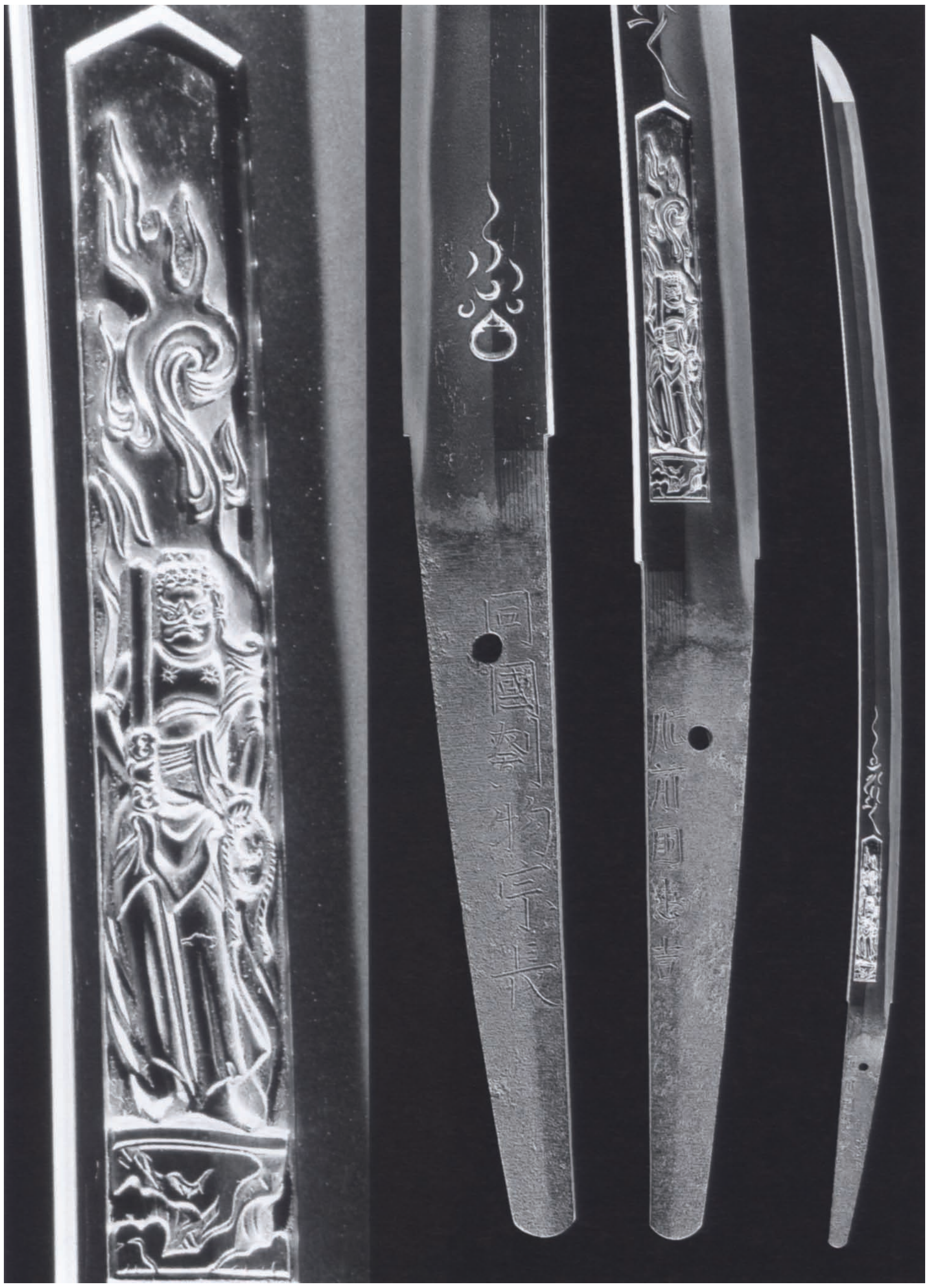
The swordsmith Tadayoshi was retained by the daimyo of Hizen province (present-day Saga Prefecture). His works date from between 1599 and 1632. In 1596, Tadayoshi went to Kyōto to study under Umetada Myōju. He returned to Saga in 1598 and faithfully perpetuated Myōju's style, characterized by refined forging and a bright *hamon* (tempering pattern). This example of Tadayoshi's work has masterful carvings of Fudō Myōō, a Buddhist deity, on the *omote* (obverse) and a dragon and sacred jewel on the *ura* (reverse) that are very similar to the carvings on the *tachi* by Myōju (cat. no. 99). The forging and the *hamon* similarly reflect how closely he hewed to his teacher's style.

Tadayoshi was in the mainline of the Hizen smiths, who were protected by the powerful Nabeshima family. His school was the most successful group of smiths active in the Edo period, and indeed his name continued to be used for nine generations. This sword is a masterpiece of the first-generation Tadayoshi. Although the blade is not inscribed with a date, from the form of the characters in the inscription the sword can be dated to 1613. The carving on the blade is by Munenaga, another student of Umetada Myōju. HK



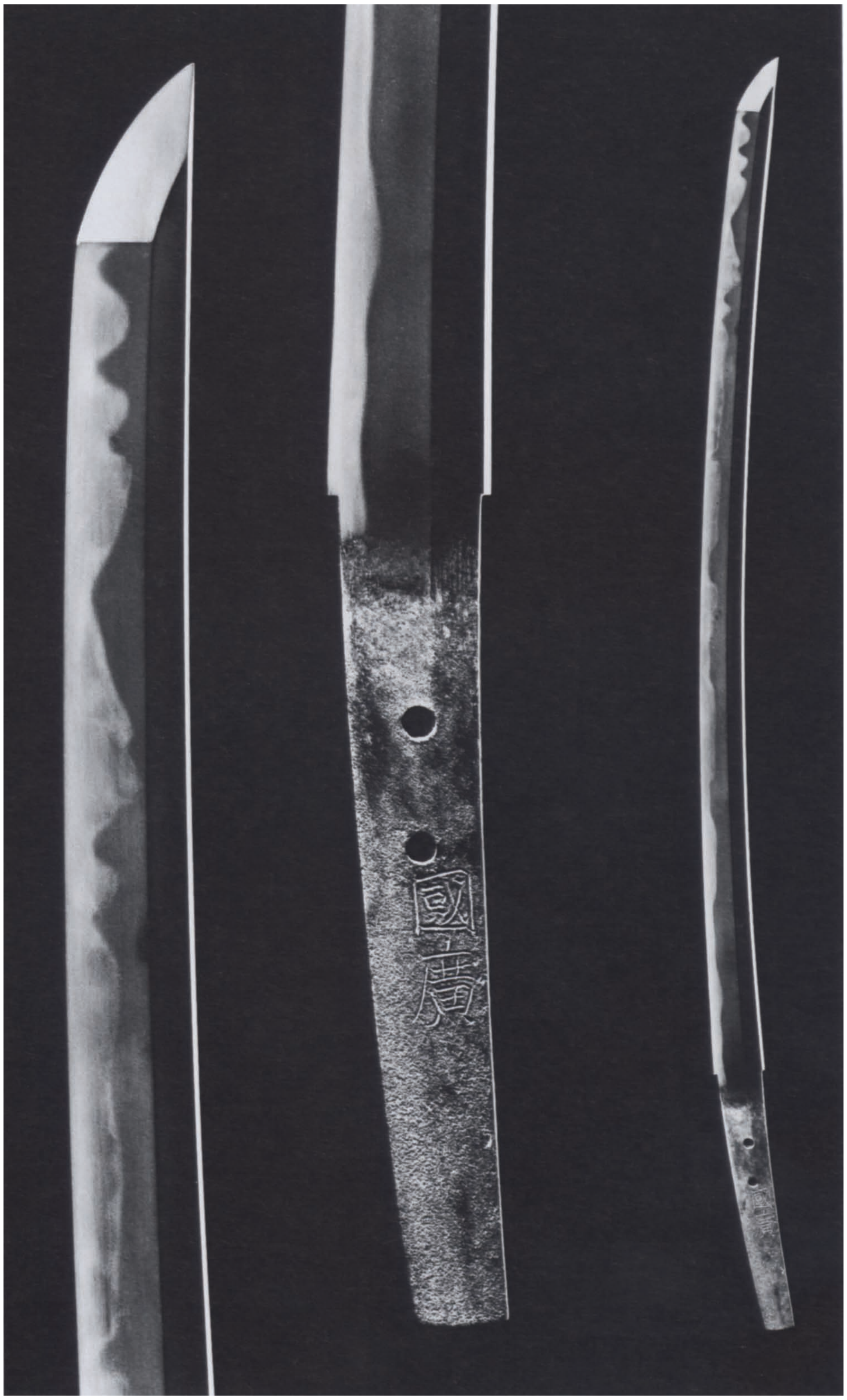
Kunihiro

## 101.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword), known as "Katō Kunihiro"

## 重要文化財 刀 号：加藤国広

Momoyama period, 17th century
Steel
L. 69.5 cm (27⅜ in.); curvature 2 cm (¾ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 国広 *KUNIHIRO*
Mitsui Memorial Museum, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**



Kunihiro was a samurai who was retained by the Itō family of Obi, in Hyūga province (present-day Miyazaki Prefecture), as was his father, a smith who signed his blades with the name "Ryohaku." Early in his career, Kunihiro signed his blades with the name "Ryohaku-an Kunihiro," Ryohaku-an being the name of his father's villa. After the decline of his lord's family, Kunihiro moved to Kyōto and in 1590 made swords at Ashikaga, in Shimotsuke province (present-day Tochigi Prefecture), settling in Ichijō Horikawa, a district of Kyōto, in about 1599. He is considered one of the ancestor-founders of the *shintō* ("new sword") smiths because he developed a style that was utterly different from earlier smiths. He also nurtured many pupils, including ten famous smiths who were active not only in Kyōto but also in Ōsaka, where they provided the foundation for schools that produced some of that city's representative smiths, such as Tsuda Echizen no kami Sukehiro and Inoue Shinkai.

This sword is among the grandest works by Kunihiro: the blade is broad, with an extended *kissaki* (point section), and the forging is tight *itame* (wood grain) densely enriched with *ji-nie* (visible crystals of steel in the area between the ridge and the edge). The *hamon* (tempering pattern) has squarish *gunome* (irregular wave shapes) superimposed on large *notare* (undulations) and is likewise bright with *ji-nie* throughout. The sword was a beloved possession of the warrior Katō Kiyomasa (1562–1611) and is thus known as the "Katō Kunihiro." It passed into the hands of Tokugawa Yorinobu, founder of the Kishū branch of the Tokugawa family, on the occasion of his marriage to Yoririn, Katō Kiyomasa's daughter.

ST

Hankei

### 102.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword)

## 重要文化財 刀 繁慶

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Momoyama period–Edo period, 17th century
Steel
L. 81.8 cm (32¼ in.); curvature 2.1 cm (⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 小野繁慶 *ONO HANKEI*;
inscribed on reverse: 奉納摂州 住吉大明神御宝前
*HONO SETSUSHU SUMIYOSHI DAIMYOJIN GOHOZEN*
(dedicated before the deity of the Sumiyoshi
shrine, Setsu province)
Sumiyoshi-taisha Shrine, Ōsaka
**Important Cultural Property**

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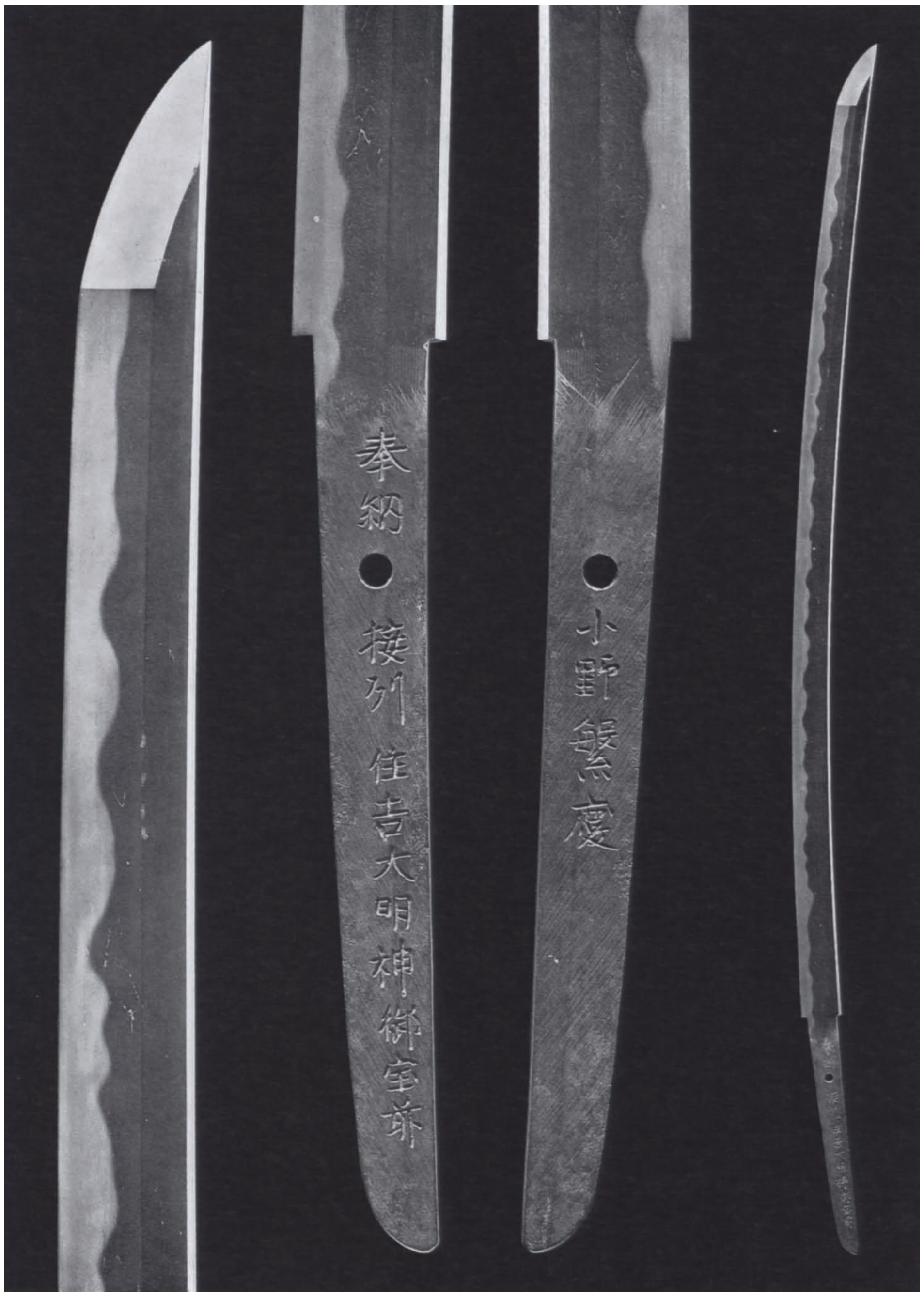
Hankei was originally a gunsmith of Mikawa province (present-day Aiichi Prefecture) named Kiyotaka. He was commissioned by the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada (1579–1632), to make guns for dedication to the great shrines of Japan. When he became a swordsmith, he signed his blades with the name "Hankei." Many of his swords, like his guns, were made for dedication to shrines. He himself dedicated this *katana* to the Sumiyoshi-taisha, whose deity was venerated as a guardian for sea voyagers and *waka* poets.

Hankei's style is characterized by a prominent *itame* (wood grain) forging pattern with dense *nie* (visible crystals of steel), giving it the appearance of tree bark. The style is similar to that of Etchū Norishige, a Kamakura-period smith, leading to the theory that Hankei looked to Norishige's work as an ideal. This blade, the longest by Hankei, brims with power and exhibits all the hallmarks of his style, from the prominent *ō-itame* (large wood grain) forging with *chikei* (bright curving lines) in the area between the ridge and the edge, to his characteristic *hamon*, which has *gunome-midare* (compact irregular waves) with powerful *nie*, *sunagashi* (grain formations resembling lines of sand), and *kinsuji* (curling, radiant lines). HK



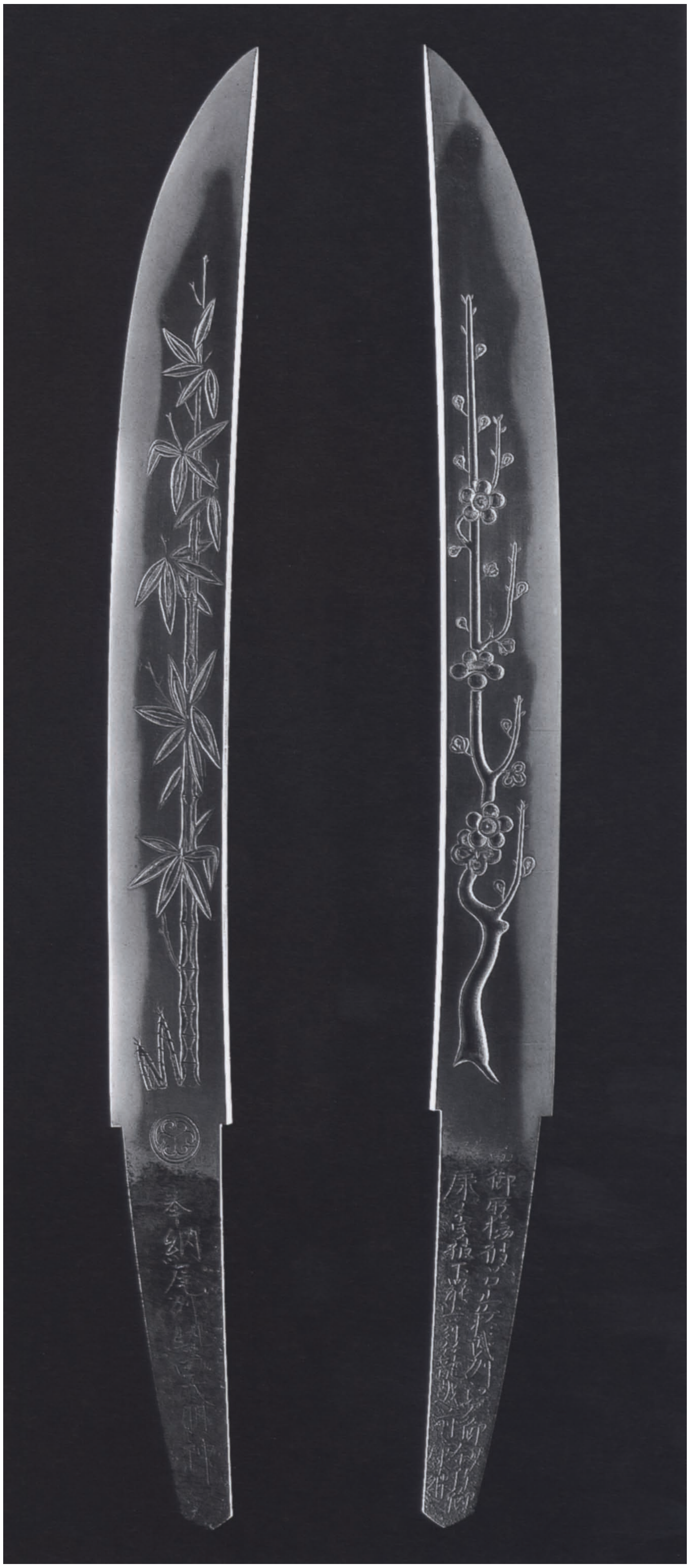
Yasutsugu

## 103.

## Blade for a *wakizashi* (short sword)

## 重要文化財 脇差 康継

Momoyama period, 17th century
Steel
L. 35.3 cm (13⅞ in.); curvature 0.45 cm (3⁄16 in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 奉納尾州熱田大明神 *HŌNŌ BISHŪ ATSUTA DAIMYŌJIN* (dedicated to the Atsuta shrine in Owari province), *aoi mon*; inscribed on reverse: 葵紋) 両御所様被召出於武州江戸御剣作御紋康之字被下罷上刻飜 越前康継 *RYOGOSHO SAMA (NI) MESHI IDASARE BUSHU EDO (NI) OITE GYOKEN (WO) TSUKURU GOMON YASU NO JI MAKARI KUDASARE KOKURO (NI) JO (SU) ECHIZEN YASUTSUGU* (Echizen Yasutsugu made this sword having been summoned to Edo by the two in the great residence and inscribed this having been granted the character *yasu* and the use of the *mon*)
Atsuta-jingū Shrine, Aichi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

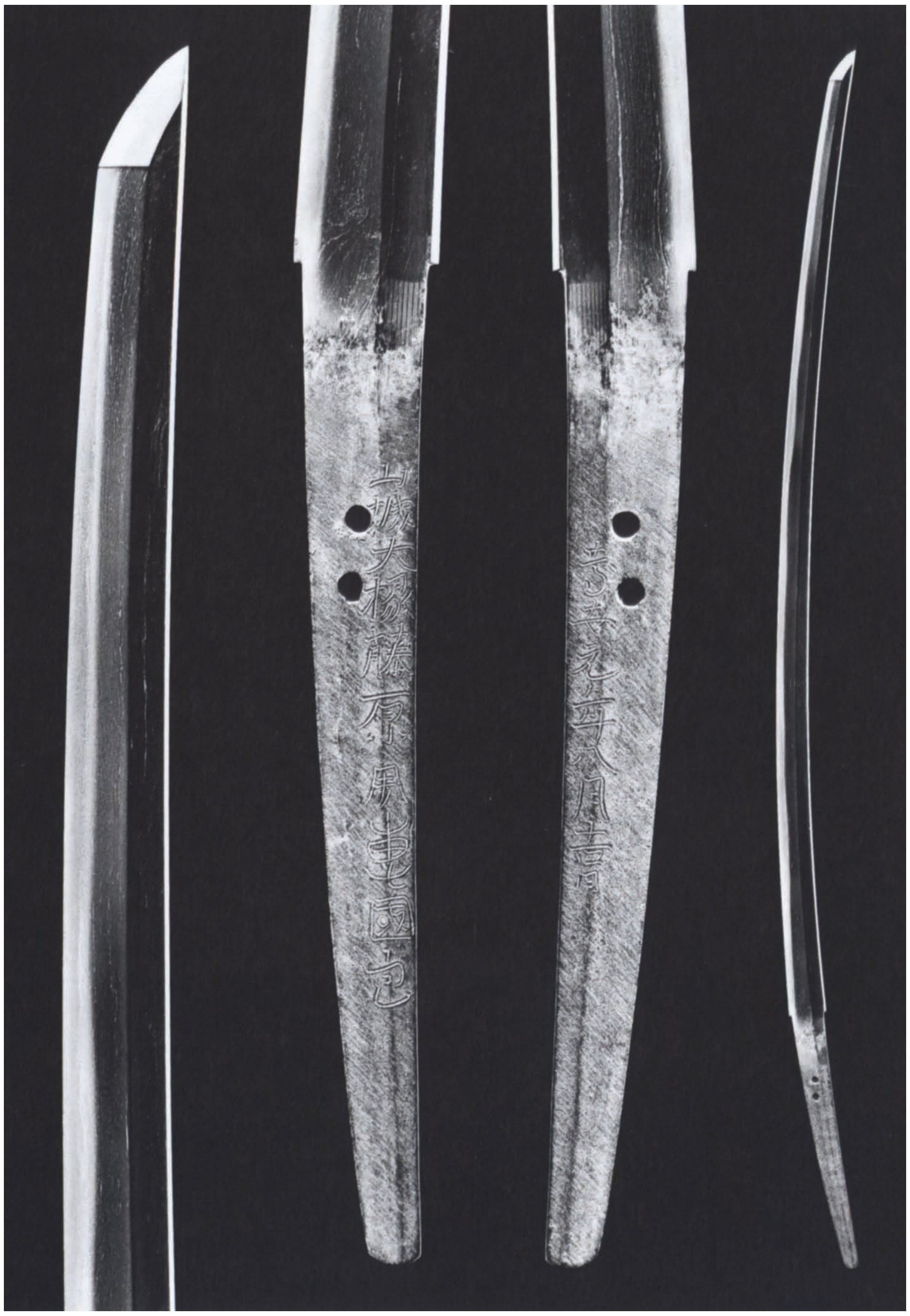


Nine generations of the Yasutsugu family were retained as swordsmiths by the Tokugawa shoguns. This *wakizashi* blade was made by the first generation, originally called Shimosaka, who migrated from Omi province (present-day Shiga Prefecture) to Echizen, where he was retained by Yūki Hideyasu (1574–1607), the second son of Tokugawa Ieyasu. He later made swords for Ieyasu himself and was honored by being granted use of the name (or character) *yasu*—from Tokugawa Ieyasu—and then changed his name to Yasutsugu.

The inscription refers to "the two in the great residence," meaning Ieyasu, the shogun, and Hidetada (1579–1632), Ieyasu's third son and the second Tokugawa shogun. It notes that Yasutsugu was granted the character *yasu* as well as use of the triple hollyhock *mon* (*mitsuba-aoe*), the hereditary insignia of the Tokugawa clan. It also records that the sword was made for dedication to Atsuta-jingū, one of the most revered shrines in Japan.

Many of the Yasutsugu family's swords are broad and imposing. The first and second generations are noted in particular for the carvings on their blades, such as the plum and bamboo motifs seen here, both auspicious symbols in Japanese culture. From the Kamakura to the Muromachi period, carvings on blades comprised mostly the names of Buddhist and Shinto deities, dragons, or the *ken*-type sword (double-edged and straight) symbolizing Fudō Myōō, a popular deity from Japanese Buddhism. Such inscriptions were generally small so as not to impair the effectiveness of the blade. Yasutsugu's bold carvings led to a shift away from religious to decorative motifs, and in this respect he is considered a pioneering swordsmith. He was also the first to employ imported foreign steel, which was rare and expensive, and to record its use in inscriptions on some of his blades.

HK



Kunikane

**104.**

## Blade for a *katana*

## 重要美術品 刀 国包

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Edo period, 1648
Steel
L. 81.2 cm (32 in.); curvature 2.6 cm (1 in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 山城大掾藤原用恵国包 *YAMASHIRO DAIJO FUJIWARA NO YŌKEI KUNIKANE*; dated on reverse: 慶安元年八月吉日 *KEIAN GANNEN HACHI GATSU KICHIJITSU* (an auspicious day in the eighth month of the first year of the Kei'an era [1648])
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture
**Important Art Object**

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The swordsmith Kunikane was born into the Hongo family and became a retainer of the Date family of Mutsu province (present-day Miyagi Prefecture) through the favor of Masamune, daimyo of that domain. He is said to have been a pupil of Etchū no kami Masatoshi of the Sanpin (or Mishina) group, in Kyōto, and received the title "Yamashiro Daijo," an honorary title from the emporer, in the ninth year of the Kan'ei era (1632). The name "Kunikane" was used by thirteen generations of smiths, continuing into the Bakumatsu period (ca. 1850–68), the waning days of the Tokugawa shogunate.

This blade by the first-generation Kunikane has a normal width and a deep *koshi-zori* curve, in which the center of the curvature is closer to the tang than to the point section. The distinctive *masame* (straight) forging grain is characteristic of the Yamato tradition. With its plain *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern) of shallow *notare* (undulations), it is an outstanding, vigorous sword notable for its powerful construction.

IT

Kotetsu

## 105.
## Blade for a *katana* (sword)
## 重要美術品 刀 虎徹

Edo period, 1660–64
Steel
L. 72.7 cm (28⅝ in.); curvature 1.5 cm (⅝ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 長曽祢興里虎徹入道 *NAGASONE OKISATO KOTETSU NYUDO*; inlaid in gold on reverse: 寛文元年七月二十一日 *KANBUN GANNEN SHICHIGATSU NIJUICHI NICHI* (twenty-first day of the seventh month of the first year of the Kanbun era [1661]); 三ツ胴裁断 山野勘十郎成久（花押）*MITSUDŌ SAIDAN YAMANO KANJŪRŌ NARIHISA* (*kaō*) *BUSHŪ EDO NI OITE* (Yamano Kanjuro Narihisa cut through three bodies at Edo in Bushū province)
Tsukamoto Museum of Art, Chiba Prefecture
**Important Art Object**

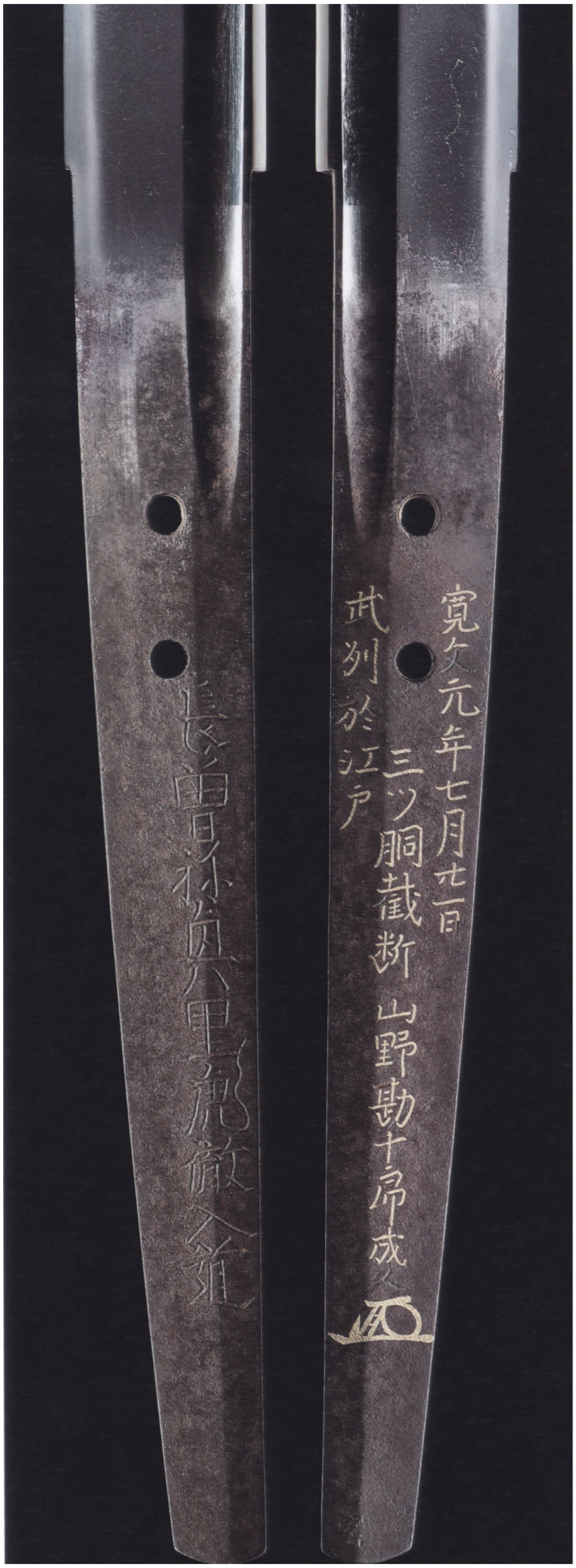
The swordsmith Kotetsu, originally an armorer of Echizen province (present-day Fukui Prefecture) named Okisato, migrated to Edo during the Meireki era (1655–58) and then changed professions. This is said to have happened when he was about fifty, which at the time would have been considered the onset of old age. With the benefit of his experience as an armorer and a genius for swordmaking, within a short time he came to be respected as the leading *shintō*, or "new sword," smith of his time.

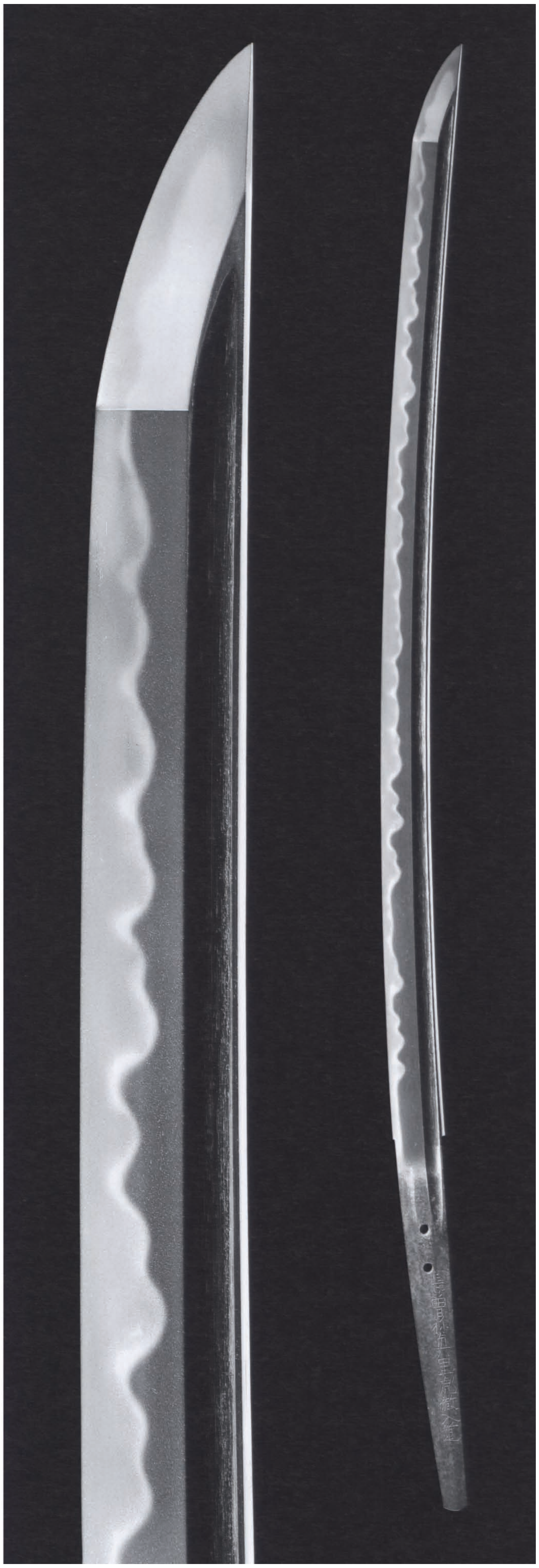
The earliest date found on a blade by Kotetsu is the second year of the Meireki era (1656) and the latest is the fifth year of the Enpo era (1677). His signature changed during his career: from 古鉄 (Kotetsu, but also read as Furutetsu, or "old iron," a reference to his previous career) in the first year of the Meireki era (1655) to 虎徹 ("tiger" Kotetsu) in the third year of the Manji era (ca. 1660) to 乕徹 ("tiger" Kotetsu written with an archaic character) in the fourth year of the Kanbun era (1664). Judging from the inscription about the cutting test and the style of the signature, this blade can be dated to sometime between 1660 and 1664. It is a superb blade—a lively and vigorous example of Kotetsu's early work—with a wide *mihaba* (midpoint width), a shallow curvature, and a beautiful *jigane* (steel surface texture) composed of tight *itame* (wood grain). The *hamon* (tempering pattern) is gorgeous as well, with a notably bright *nioi-guchi*, a misty area between the ridge and the tempering pattern comprising a fine crystalline structure of steel crystals that are not visible to the naked eye.

At the time Kotetsu was active, the blades being produced were generally of the so-called Kanbun *shintō* shape, characterized by a shallow curvature and a wide *mihaba* narrowing somewhat toward the tip compared with the width at the base. This piece, with its wide *mihaba* and *ō-kissaki* (large point), is a rarity. Although it has been shortened by about 4 centimeters, one is immediately struck by its still evident grandeur. The *togari-ba* (pointed waves) in the *hamon* as well as the *midare-komi boshi* (irregular temper line on the point) reveal the influence of the many smiths of the Mino lineage who worked in Kotetsu's home province of Echizen. The clear and beautiful *jigane* with *chikei* (bright, short curving lines) and the *hamon*, with its extraordinarily bright *nioi-guchi* and substantial *ashi* (notches), inevitably invoke comparisons to the works of the smiths Go no Yoshihiro and Nanki Shigekuni, on whose swords this blade is thought to have been modeled.

Many of Kotetsu's blades are inscribed on the tang with the results of cutting tests (*tameshi-giri*). The gold-inlaid inscription on this one, by the sword-tester Yamano Kanjūrō Narihisa, attests to the excellent serviceability of Kotetsu's work, one of the reasons his swords have long enjoyed the rank of *saijo ōwaza-mono*, meaning that it has been judged to be the sharpest of blades and possesses the greatest cutting efficacy.

MM


長曽祢興里入道虎徹
寛文元年七月廿一日
三ツ胴截断 山野勘十郎成久
武州於江戸



Sukehiro

## 106.

## Blade for a *katana* (sword)

## 重要美術品 刀 助広

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Edo period, 1677
Steel
L. 69.7 cm (27½ in.); curvature 1.2 cm (½ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 津田越前守助広 *TSUDA ECHIZEN (NO) KAMI SUKEHIRO*; dated on reverse: 延宝五年八月日 *ENPŌ GONEN HACHIGATSU HI* (a day in the eighth month of the fifth year of the Enpō era [1677])
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Art Object**

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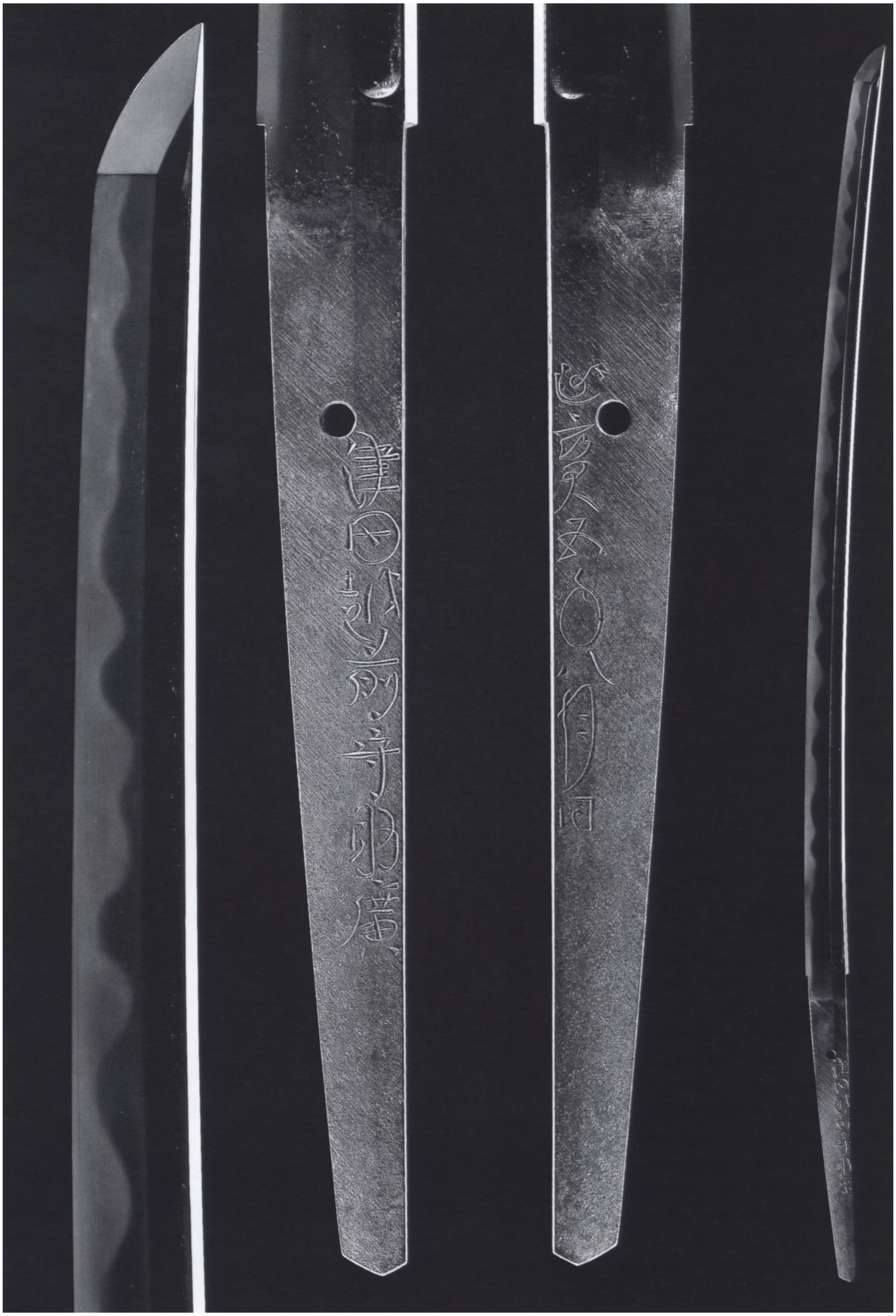
The swordsmiths of the Edo period lived mainly in the respective castle towns of each province and in Edo itself, where the shogun's family resided. There were also many smiths in Kyōto, which had been Japan's capital since the Heian period, and in Ōsaka, the country's commercial center. The maker of this sword, Sukehiro, studied under, and later became the son-in-law of, the first Sukehiro, who was the son of the first Kawachi no Kami Kunisuke; the latter, in turn, is said to have been a pupil of Horikawa Kunihiro, the ancestor-founder of the *shintō* ("new sword") tradition (see cat. no. 101).

Along with Kotetsu of Edo and Inoue Shinkai of Ōsaka, Tsuda Sukehiro (Tsuda is his family name), also of Ōsaka, is considered one of the great smiths of the *shintō* era. Compared to the blades of Kotetsu, which generally have a *hamon* (tempering pattern) of *notare-ba* (undulations) mixed with some *gunome* (irregular waves), the swords made in Ōsaka, even when they have a *suguha hamon* (straight temper line), exhibit a more flamboyant style, with extremely deep *nie* and *nioi*, terms that refer, respectively, to crystals of steel that are visible and not visible to the naked eye. Sukehiro is particularly admired for the *tōran-ba hamon* that he devised, which depicts what resemble approaching ocean waves: the most stunning *hamon* of the *shintō* era. Indeed, the *tōran-ba hamon* was the dominant style of the age and was copied by smiths such as Echigo no kami Kanesada and Ozaki Suketaka of Ōsaka and, during the Bakumatsu (the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate), by Suishinshi Masahide and his followers. This sword exhibits the typical *tōran-ba* of Sukehiro, with a beautiful, bright, and serene *hamon* rich in *nie* and *nioi*. It was made during Sukehiro's prime, when he was forty-one, just five years before his death.

HK



Masakiyo

## **107.**

## Blade for a *katana* (sword)

## 刀 正清

---

Edo period, 18th century
Steel
L. 74.2 cm (29¼ in.); curvature 1.8 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: (葵紋) 主水正正清
(*aoi mon*) MONDO (NO) SHO MASAKIYO
Tokyo National Museum

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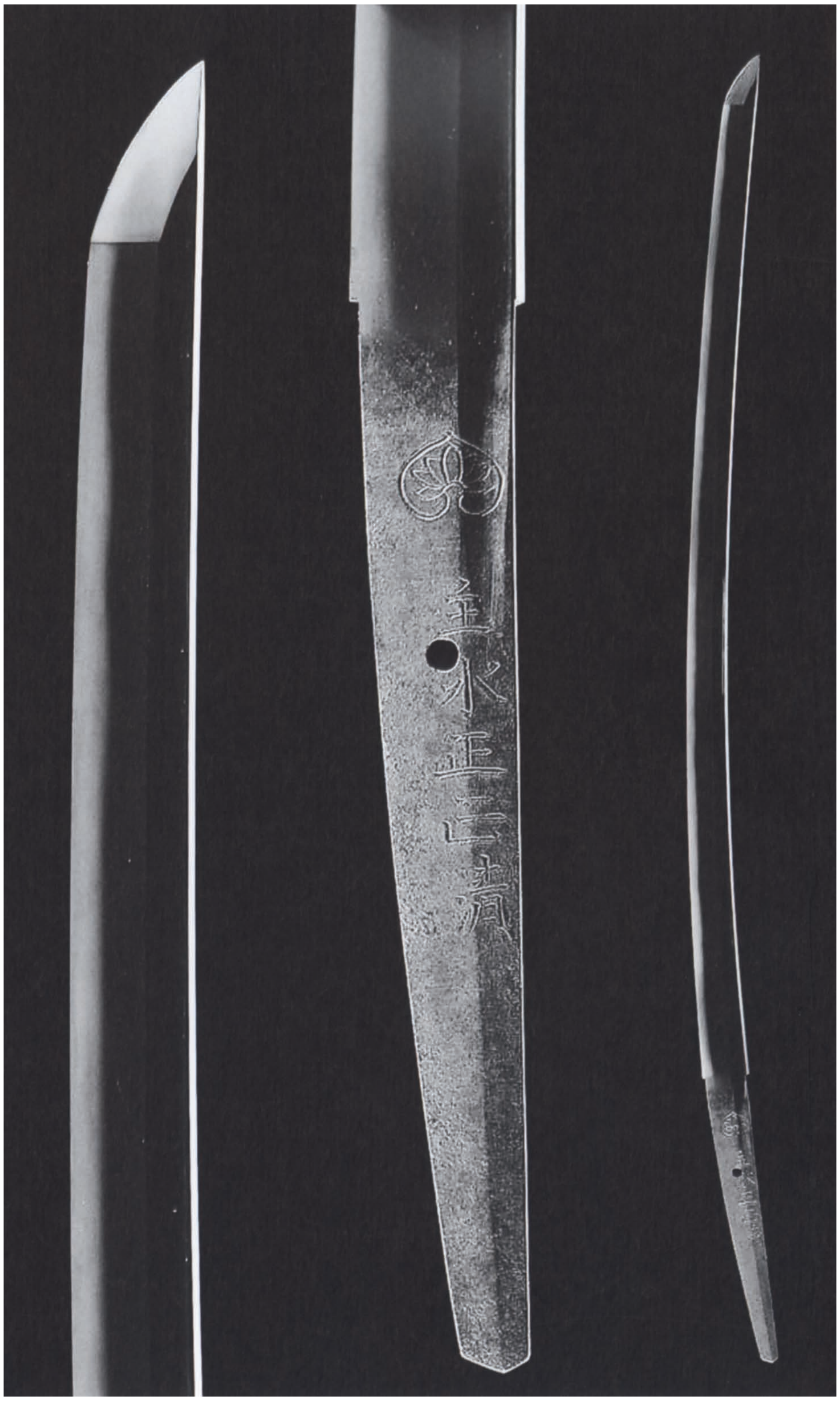

During the eighteenth century, amid the relative peace and prosperity following the establishment of the Edo *bakufu* (military government), the demand for swords fell precipitously, as did the number of active swordsmiths. To counteract this decline and to encourage the manufacture of swords, the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune (r. 1716–45), ordered the publication of the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a kind of catalogue listing all of the swordsmiths in Japan. In addition, in 1720 every smith was told to send a *wakizashi* (short sword) to the shogun, and from among them Miyakawa Masakiyo and Ippei (Ichidaira) Yasukiyo, both of Satsuma province (in present-day Kagoshima Prefecture), and Nobukuni Shigekane of Chikuzen province (present-day Fukuoka Prefecture) were summoned to Edo to make swords before Yoshimune. From that time on, they were granted the right to carve one leaf of the triple hollyhock *mon*, insignia of the shogun, on their blades.

The Naminohira school of swordsmiths had been active in Satsuma since the Heian period. Beginning about the middle Edo period they changed their overall style to reflect new techniques introduced by Hōjōji Yoshitsugu, a smith active during the Kanbun era (1661–73). This grand sword is a typical blade by Masakiyo, a Naminohira smith, and reflects the distinctive influence of the Sōshū style that is notably different from the school's previously subdued *suguha hamon* (straight tempering pattern). It has considerable breadth, *itame* (wood grain) forging with *chikei* (bright curving lines), and a *hamon* that is *gunome* (irregular waves) with some that are *togari* (pointed). Other notable characteristics of the *hamon* include *kinsuji* (curling, radiant lines similar to *chikei*), *sunagashi* (a grain formation resembling drifting lines of sand or frayed silk), and much *nie* (visible crystals of steel). HK

Kiyomaro

## 108.
## Blade for a *katana* (sword)
## 刀 正行

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Edo period, 19th century
Steel
L. 71 cm (28 in.); curvature 2 cm (¾ in.)
Inscribed on obverse of tang: 山浦環正行
*YAMAURA TAMAKI MASAYUKI*
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo

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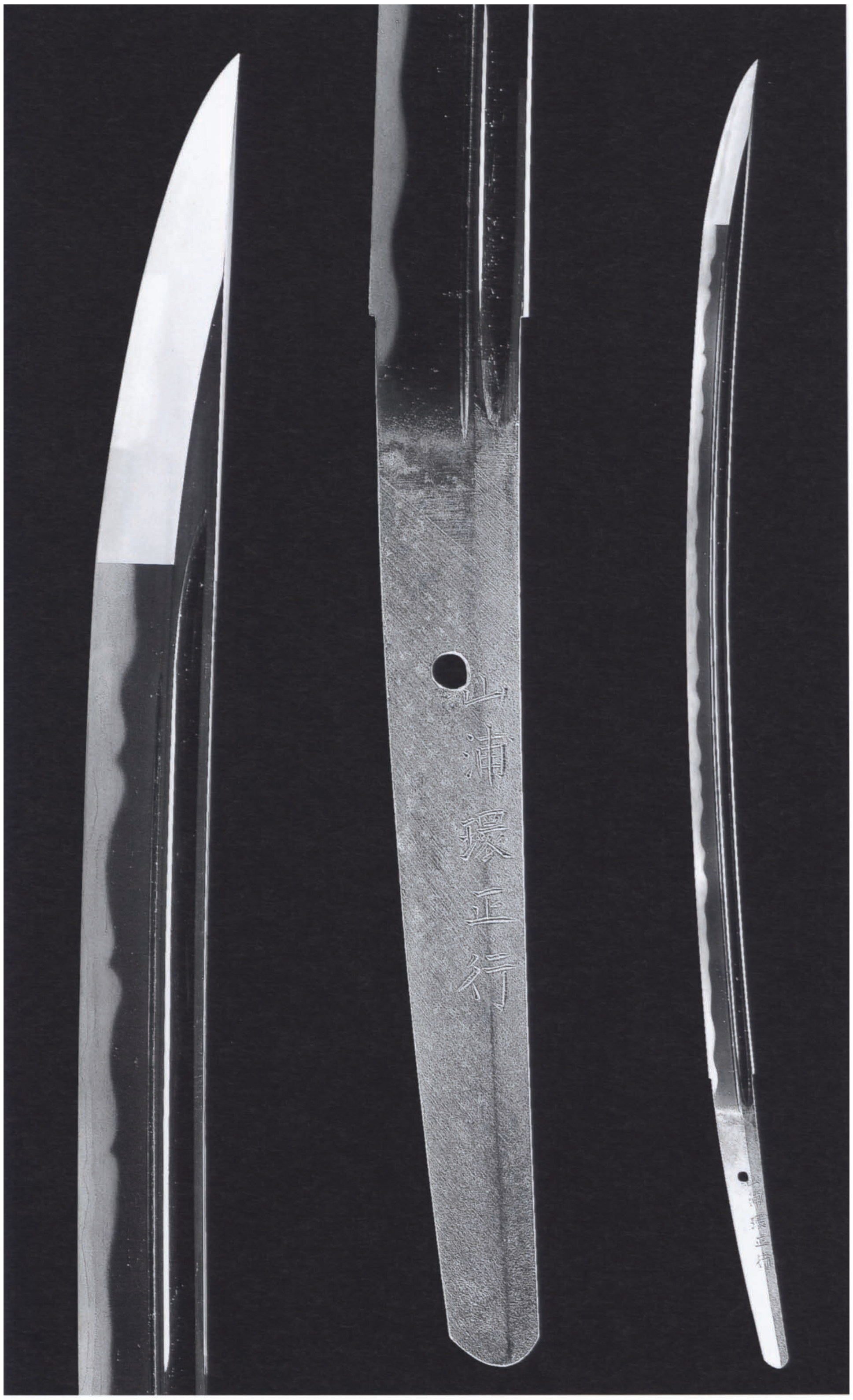
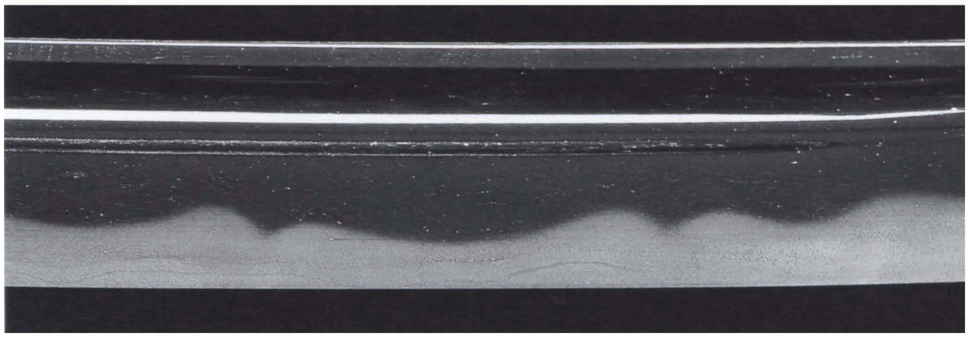
Yamaura Tamaki was the original name of Kiyomaro, the great craftsman of the Bakumatsu era, the period that witnessed the decline of the Tokugawa shogunate. At first he signed his swords with the name "Masayuki," as seen here, but at the age of thirty-four—in the third year of the Kōka era (1846)—he changed his name to Kiyomaro. He was born into a rural samurai family in Shinano province (present-day Nagano Prefecture) and was apprenticed to Hamabe Toshitaka, a smith retained by the Sanada clan of the Ueda domain, in Shinshu province. From there he went to Edo, where he initially followed the ancient Shizu style (see cat. no. 93) but he later developed his own style based on the Sōshū tradition (see cat. no. 83). He became one of the most popular Bakumatsu smiths for his exquisite *hamon* (tempering pattern) and for the magnificence of his swords as practical weapons.

This *katana* is of normal length, but the blade is broad and has a large *kissaki* (point section), recalling some of the epicly proportioned *tachi* of the Nanbokuchō period that were later cut down. The forging, of beautiful steel, is *itame* (wood grain) with *chikei* (bright curling lines). The powerful *hamon* is *notare* (undulating) with *togari-ba* (peaks) of strong *nie* (visible crystals of steel). Throughout the tempering pattern there are also *kinsen* (bright curling streaks) and *sunagashi* (grain formations resembling lines of sand or frayed silk). A typical work by Kiyomaro, it was made when he was about thirty years old.

IT





Gassan Sadakazu

### 109.

## Blade for a *tachi* (slung sword)

## 太刀 貞一

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Taishō era, 1915
Steel
L. 68.4 cm (26⅞ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of tang: 帝室技芸員月山貞一八十一歳謹作 *TEISHITSU GIGEI-IN GASSAN SADAKAZU HACHIJUISSAI KINSAKU* (respectfully made by Gassan Sadakazu, Imperial Artist, at the age of eighty-one); inscribed on obverse: 金象嵌 大正乙卯奉祝登極 *TAISHO KINOTO TŌ TOKYOKU O HŌSHUKU* (in celebration of the ascension of the emperor in 1915); inlaid in gold: 帝国陸軍軍人奉献 *TEIKOKU RIKUGUN GUNJIN HŌKEN* (dedicated by the soldiers of the Imperial Army)
Tokyo National Museum

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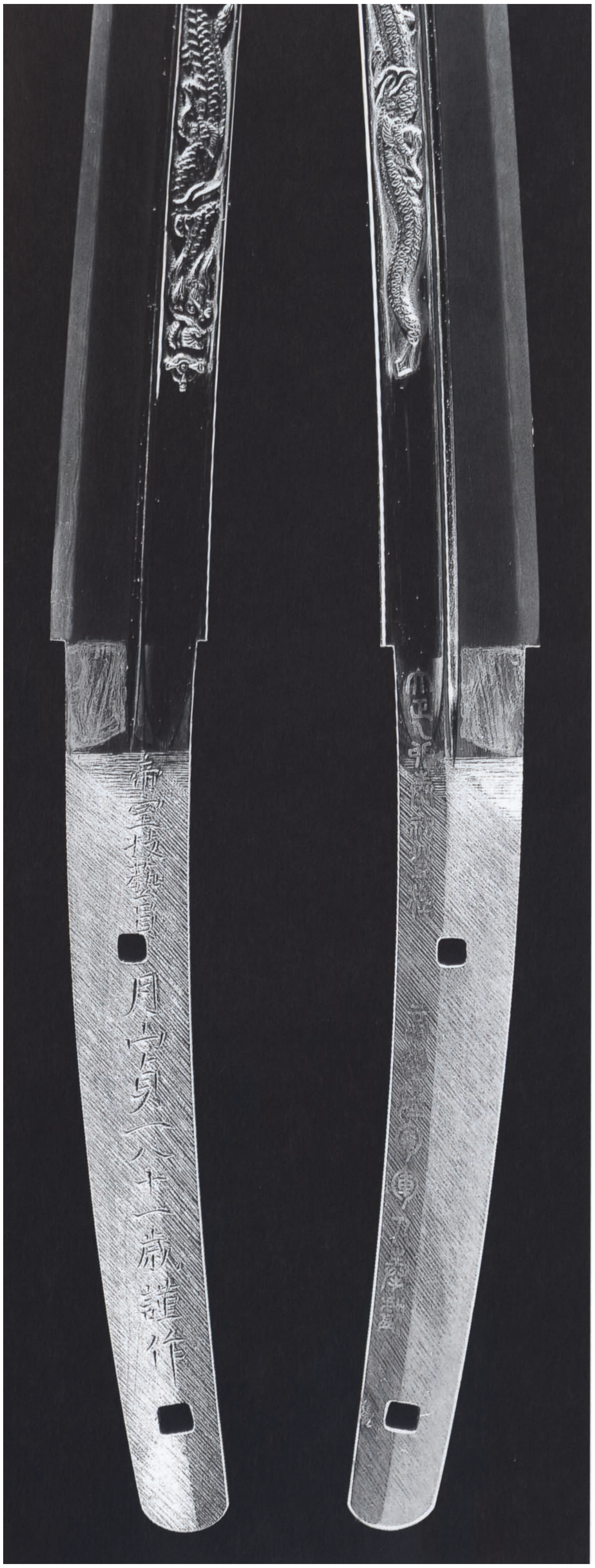
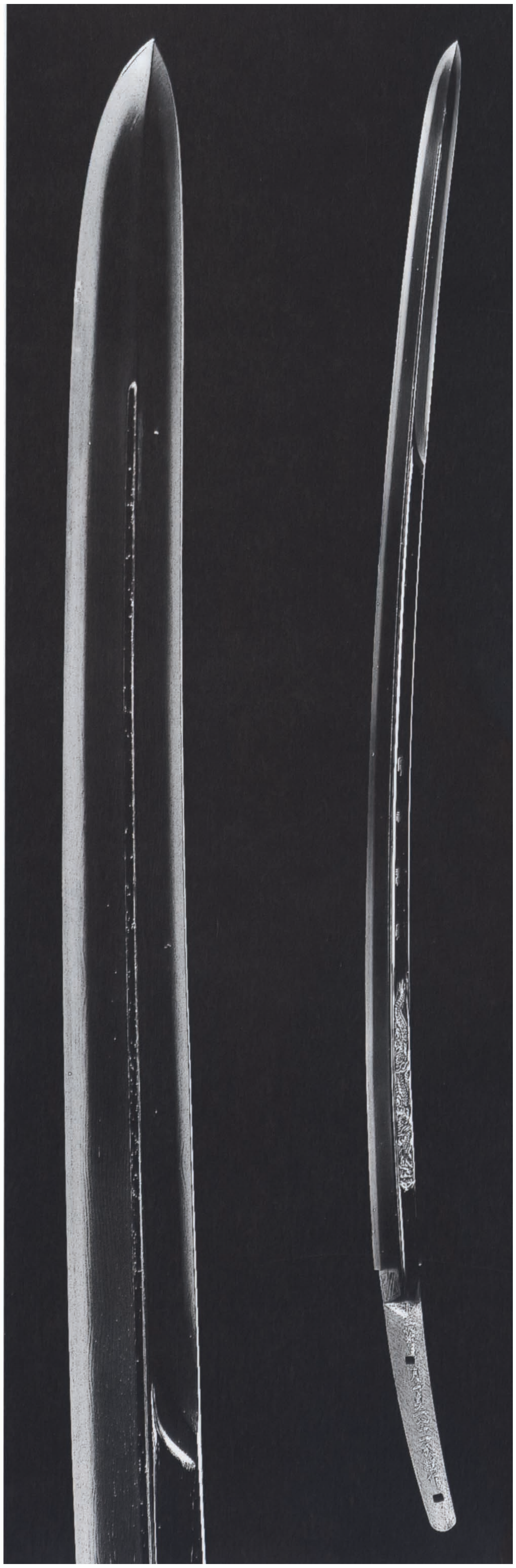
Following the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, the Meiji government in 1876 issued the *Haitō Rei*, a law prohibiting the wearing of swords, as part of its process of modernizing Japan. Consequently, swordsmiths were unable to manufacture swords for actual use. It was under these circumstances that the Emperor Meiji (r. 1866–1912), seeking to preserve and promulgate traditional Japanese arts and culture, established the *Teishitsu Gigei-In* system of official "court artists." In 1906 Gassan Sadakazu, the maker of this blade, was the first swordsmith so appointed.

Sadakazu, who lived in Ōsaka, was a descendant of the Gassan group of swordsmiths, who worked at the foot of the Gassan mountains, in present-day Yamagata Prefecture. According to the oldest book on swords, the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi* (cat. no. 211), they were active beginning about the Heian period; however, the oldest known Gassan works now appear to date from the Nanbokuchō or early Muromachi period. This sword, made in 1915, when Sadakazu was eighty-one and in the final year of his life, has a distinctive forging grain of layered undulations called *ayasugi-hada*—customarily translated as "cryptomeria twill"—which beginning in the Muromachi period had been a speciality of the Gassan school. The sword is a copy of one in the imperial collection that was made about the tenth century and is known as "Ko-garasu Maru" (Little Crow), regarded as the prototypical "true" Japanese sword. This *tachi*, together with an *efu-dachi* mounting and sword box, were dedicated by the army to the Emperor Taishō to celebrate his coronation in 1915.

HK


帝室技藝員
月山貞一八十二歳謹作



OGAWA MORIHIRO

# SWORD MOUNTINGS AND FITTINGS

## INTRODUCTION: CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES

A sword mounting refers to the components into which a blade is fitted in order to protect the wearer from injury, prevent damage to the blade, and enable the most efficient use of the sword in combat. The basic mounting of a Japanese sword—called a *koshirae* (or *goshirae* in combination with another word)—comprises a *tsuka* (hilt), which fits onto the tang of the blade so that the sword can be held in the hands; a *saya* (scabbard), the sheath in which the blade is kept; and a variety of other components, known as fittings, that served the practical purpose of strengthening the mounting but are often greatly prized for their superb artistic and decorative qualities as well.

Japanese sword fittings include the *tsuba* (sword guard), a disk-shaped piece of metal that prevents the palm from slipping down the hilt onto the blade; the *tsuka-gashira* (pommel cap), known commonly as the *kashira*, and the *fuchi* (collar), which are often made in sets and attach to either end of the hilt; the *mekugi* (peg), which secures the blade in the hilt, and a pair of *menuki* (decorative fittings at the side of the hilt); a mouthpiece at the top of the scabbard, either a *kuchi-kanamono* or *koiguchi*; a chape (*kojiri* or *ishizuki*) at the end of the scabbard; and either *ashi-kanamono*, the components from which the scabbard of a *tachi*-style mounting is suspended from the waist, or a *kurigata* (cord knob), through which the tie cord (*sageo*) of an *uchigatana*-style mounting is passed (see discussion of mounting types below).

The complete mounting of the Japanese sword is a composite work of art whose robust beauty derives in part from the personal style and expert skills of numerous craftsman but also from the exquisite materials and techniques used to make them. With few exceptions, the hilt of a Japanese sword is wrapped in ray- (*Dasyatis sephen*) or sharkskin, while scabbards are often decorated with lacquer, including *maki-e*, in which metal dust (usually gold) is sprinkled onto a lacquered surface before it sets and then polished or otherwise enhanced using a number of different methods. Cords used to bind the hilt are likewise made of fine materials, usually braided silk colored with natural vegetable dyes. A number of metals and alloys were used to make fittings, from gold, silver, and copper to *shibuichi* and *shakudō*. *Shibuichi*, literally "one part in four," is an alloy of copper that contains 25 percent silver and can thus be patinated to a range of grays and browns. *Shakudō* is also an alloy, predominantly copper, that contains a few percent gold and patinates to a deep black. Fittings were then worked using such techniques as high-relief engraving (*taka-bori*), oblique engraving (*katakiri-bori*) and piercing (*sukashi*). In addition, splendid designs and decorative effects were achieved with inlay (*zōgan*) and applied precious metals and patinated alloys (*iro-e*, or "colored pictures"). Many of the representations on mountings and fittings are taken from nature, such as Japanese mountains, lakes, rivers, and trees; others depict social customs and popular stories.

Once mounted, and depending on how it would be used, the Japanese sword was either carried suspended from the waist or was inserted through a belt or cord tied around the waist. Swords mounted in the former type are referred to as *tachi*, while those in the latter style include *uchigatana*, *koshigatana*, *wakizashi*, and *aikuchi*. A *tachi* mounting (see fig. 4.2a–j) generally has two metal components (*ashi-kanamono*) from which it is suspended from the waist on cords (*obi-tori*), with the cutting edge facing down. *Uchigatana* mountings (see fig. 4.2k–p) and other related types are inserted through the belt, with the cutting edge facing up, and are secured by a cord (*sageo*) that passes through the *kurigata*, the small chestnut-shaped pierced knob on the side of the scabbard.

## KOFUN-PERIOD MOUNTINGS

The underlying structures of the scabbards and hilts of Japanese sword mountings are made of a soft wood called *ho* (a type of magnolia). With one exception, those dating to the Kofun period (ca. 3rd–7th century) have been recovered

Fig. 4.1. Detail of *kozuka* (utility knife handle) by Yokoya Sōmin, Edo period, 18th century (cat. no. 158)

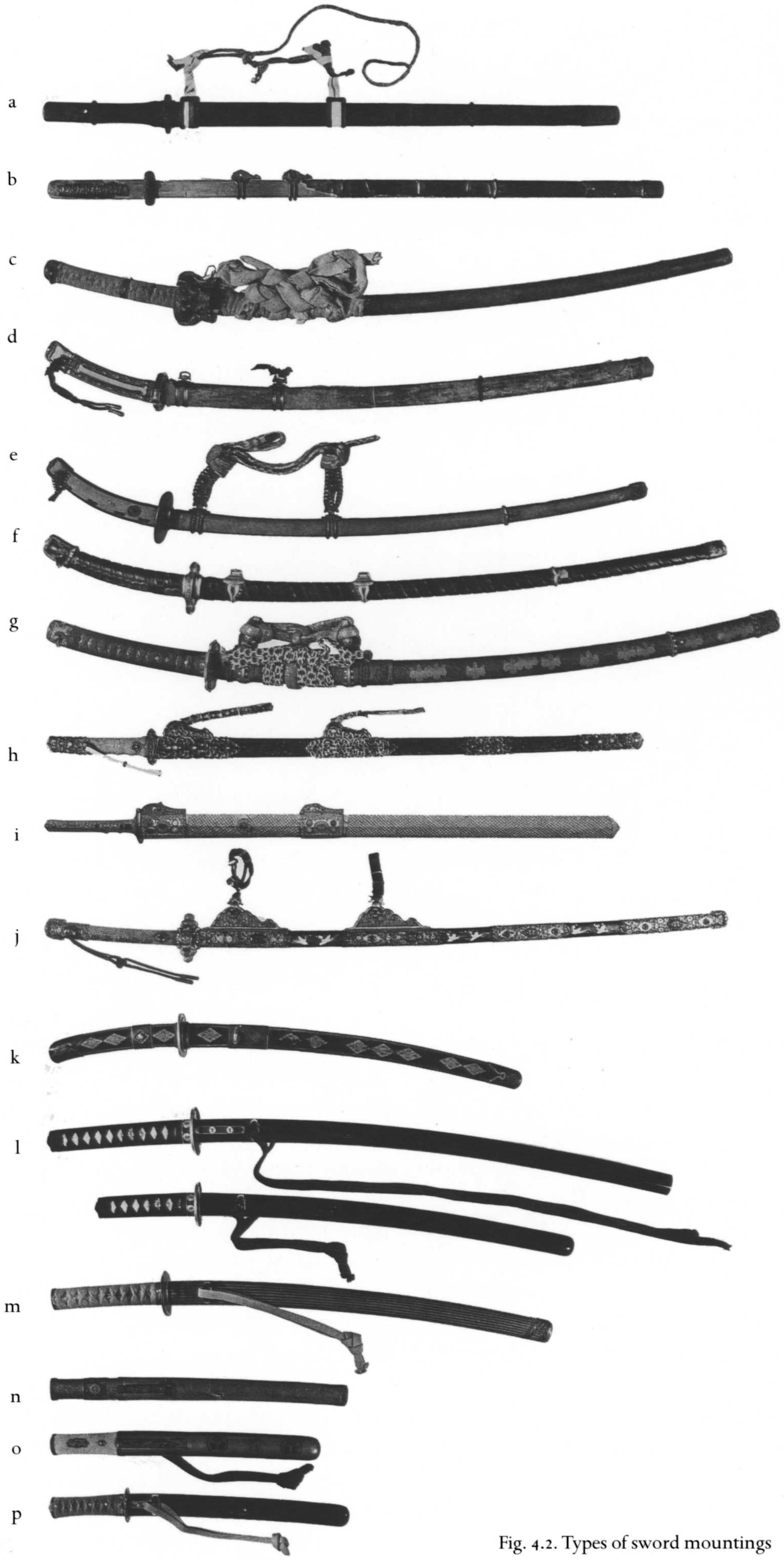

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Fig. 4.2. Types of sword mountings

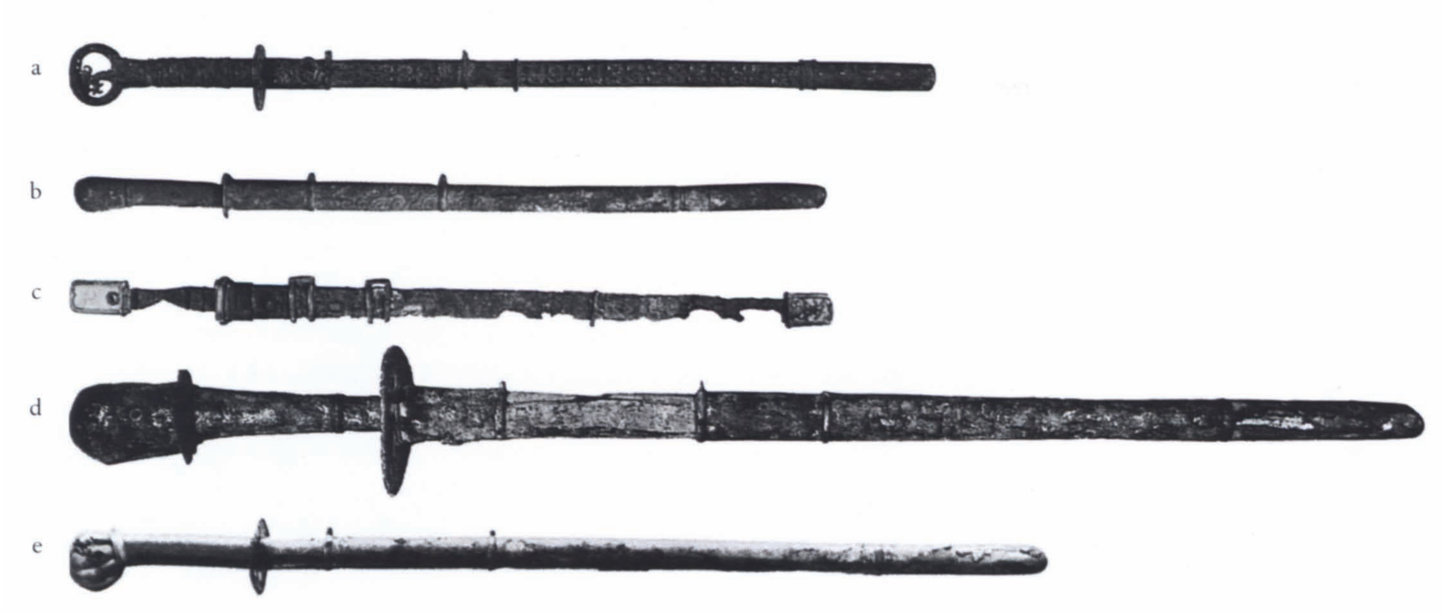


Fig. 4.3. Types of Kofun-period mountings

from excavated contexts and thus have been subject to significant decay. An examination of excavated findings indicates that a cylindrical metal piece was wrapped around the mouth of early scabbards and that many had two *ashi* from which the mounting was suspended from the waist. Some were decorated with thin gilt copper or silver sheet embossed with overall circular patterns or spirals. Many excavated Kofun-period *tsuba* are flat, made of iron, and egg-shaped; rarely there are also mountings with no *tsuba*.

Today Kofun-period mountings are classified according to the shape of the pommel, which were made of iron or, occasionally, gilt copper. For example, a *tachi* with a pommel in the shape of a ring encircling a dragon or phoenix is known as a *kantō tachi* (fig. 4.3a; see also cat. no. 52); other pommel shapes include a cylinder (*entō*; fig. 4.3b), mountain (*keitō*; fig. 4.3d), rectangle (*hōtō*; fig. 4.3c), and a human fist (*kabutsuchi*; fig. 4.3e). It is believed that the *kantō* and *entō tachi* styles were imported from Korea and China, whereas the *kabutsuchi tachi* is unique to Japan. Although *hōtō tachi*, which have been excavated from late Kofun-period tombs, exhibit some aspects of Chinese influence, it is possible that this mounting style, too, is uniquely Japanese. The only Kofun-period mounting not recovered from an excavation is a *kantō tachi* made about the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century (fig. 4.4). Housed in the Komura-jinja, a shrine in Kōchi Prefecture, on the island of Shikoku, its blade is a *katakiriha-zukuri chokutō* (a straight, single-edged sword) and it is considered a *goshintai*: an object in which a *kami*, or Shinto deity, resides.

Many unmounted iron sword blades have been excavated from Kofun-period tombs along with mounted and decorated *tachi*. These blades were likely intended for the common soldiery and therefore would have had inferior mountings. The richly decorated *tachi*—no doubt symbols of the authority of the regional rulers with whom they were interred—were in many cases accompanied by other arms and armor, including iron staff weapons as well as mirrors and various types of jewels. It is notable, and perhaps not a coincidence, that these grave finds parallel the mirror, jewel, and sword (*Kusanagi no Tsurugi*) that constitute the Japanese imperial regalia, referred to as the Three Sacred Treasures.

### MILITARY AND CEREMONIAL *TACHI* MOUNTINGS

The first sword mountings were simple and made with practicality in mind. As they gradually came to be decorated and grew increasingly elaborate, mountings intended for military use became distinct from those made for ceremonial purposes. In the seventh century, following cultural exchange with the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–906) dynasties of China, Japan's political system and cultural development were greatly influenced by the relative sophistication and cosmopolitanism of the Chinese court. This influence extended to sword mountings, which during the Nara period (710–794) evolved markedly to reflect the newly introduced Tang style, characterized by refined, delicate ornamentation. Surviving from that period in the Shōsō-in, the storehouse of the Tōdai-ji, Nara, are 55 swords (including *chokutō* and *tachi* mountings), 85 tosu (small knives), and 38 staff weapons (including *hoko*): a total of 178 edged weapons. Among the most oustanding is the *tachi* mounting recorded in the *Tōdai-ji Kenmotsucho* (Record of

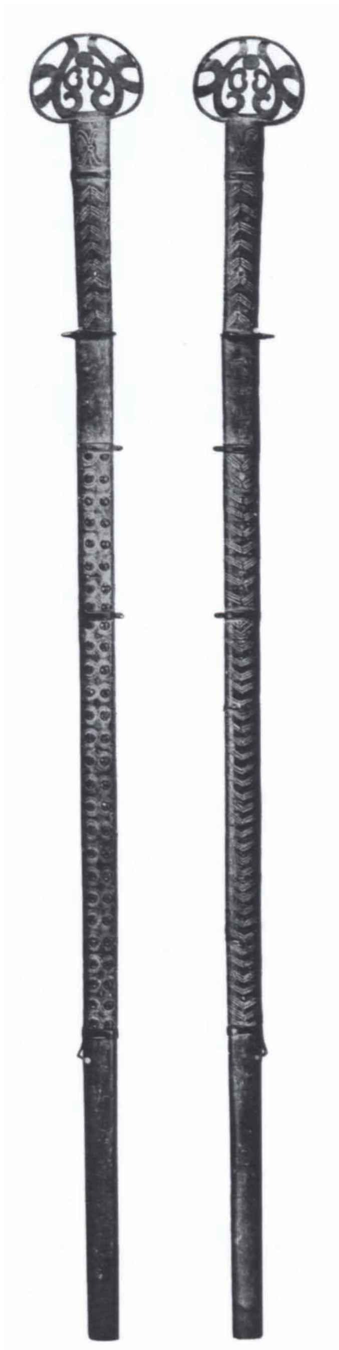


Fig. 4.4. *Kantō tachi* mounting, Kofun period, ca. late 6th–early 7th century. Komura-jinja Shrine, Kōchi Prefecture

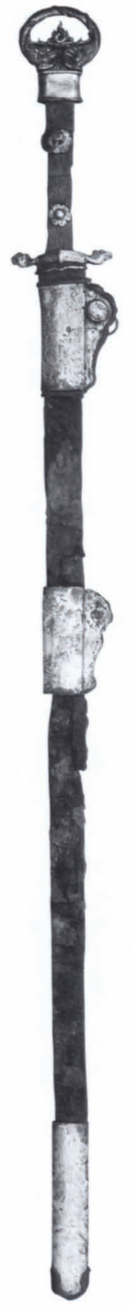


Fig. 4.5. Sword and scabbard, Chinese, ca. 600 A.D. Gilt bronze and silver. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, 1930 (30.65.2)

Dedicated Treasures of Tōdai-ji Temple) as the *Kingindenso no Karatachi* (Chinese *tachi* with fine gold and silver work), which as its name suggests is believed to have been imported from China, probably during the eighth century. The mountings and fittings of this magnificent piece (fig. 4.2h) are lavishly embellished with inlaid jewels, shell, gold, and silver. The hilt is wrapped with white *same* (rayskin), and the scabbard bears a design of a *kirin* (an animal from Chinese mythology) as well as flowers depicted in *togidashi maki-e* lacquer. The metal fittings are carved with *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork, literally "Chinese grasses") and embellished with applied precious stones.

In the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is a Sasanian (Persian) gold-mounted, *tachi*-like sword (fig. 4.2i) that has "mountain"-shaped metal fittings similar to those of the *Kingindenso no karatachi*. These fittings also resemble those on a Chinese mounting reportedly excavated prior to 1930 from one of the imperial tombs of Mang Shan, north of Luoyang (in present-day Henan Province), which dates to about A.D. 600 (fig. 4.5). This style of scabbard mount—referred to by contemporary scholars as a P-shaped mount—is believed to have traveled along the Silk Road from Persia through China and thereafter to Japan. It is thus possible that the Chinese style of the *karatachi* in the Shōsō-in ultimately derives from Persian prototypes.

The rich and extensive decoration of the *Kingindenso no Karatachi* suggests that it was carried by a person of the highest rank. Although the blade itself was intended for practical use, it seems that this *karatachi* (which means "Tang-style" decorative *tachi*) also served ceremonial purposes. Its influence can be seen in the bejeweled mountings and fittings—particularly the pommel, the mountain-shaped *ashi-kanamono*, and the *nagakazari* (a long form of decorated chape, or *ishizuki*)—that are characteristic of the decorative mountings made for ceremonial use by courtiers during the Heian period (794–1185). Indeed, it was during this time that the *karatachi* developed into the *kazari-tachi* (see fig. 4.2j) and *hosodachi*: decorative sword mountings that were made exclusively for ceremonial use by high-ranking courtiers and that contain false blades unsuitable for combat.

Another sword preserved in the Shōsō-in—a *kurozukuri no tachi* ("black *tachi*") (fig. 4.2a)—is simple and robust, with a black-lacquered scabbard, mostly iron fittings, and a broad, thick blade. It is thought that this type of *tachi* was in general use for combat by the Nara period. The same style can be seen in a *tachi* in the collection of the Kurama-dera, Kyōto, that is believed to have been made about the late eighth to early ninth century, in the early Heian period (fig. 4.2b). According to tradition, this sword, which has a black-lacquered mounting, was used by Sakanoue no Tamuramaro (758–811), a general in the service of the Emperor Kammu (737–806). The fashion for black-lacquered *tachi* mountings—called *kokushitsu* (or *kurourushi*) *no tachi*—continued through the Kamakura into the Muromachi period. Powerful *kawazutsumi tachi* (see, e.g., cat. no. 116; fig. 4.2c), which have black-lacquered, leather-wrapped scabbards, were also fashionable from the late Kamakura through the Muromachi period.

Other military *tachi* mountings in the Heian style include the *kenukigata tachi* ("tweezer-shaped" *tachi*), a reference to the shape of the openwork hilt (fig. 4.2d); the *hyōgo gusari no tachi* and the *hyōgu gusari no tachi*, which have lengths of chain for the *obi-tori* (suspension cords) and a scabbard clad in precious-metal plate, with metal rims above, below, and along the edges (cat. nos. 110, 111; fig. 4.2h); the *kurourushi hirumaki no tachi* (black-lacquered 'leech-wrapped' *tachi*), which has a scabbard lacquered in black overall and spiral-wound with a thin strip of a metal, possibly copper or silver (cat. no. 112; fig. 4.2f); and the *ito maki no tachi* (cord- or braid-wrapped *tachi*), whose hilt and upper scabbard are bound with braid (cat. nos. 116, 120, 121, 127, 128; fig. 4.2g). Of these types of practical, military *tachi* mountings, the *kenukigata tachi*, *hyōgo gusari tachi*, and *ito maki no tachi* were also used on ceremonial occasions.

### *UCHIGATANA* MOUNTINGS

As a practical weapon, the *tachi* was used exclusively on horseback. By about the middle of the fourteenth century, as warfare in Japan gradually shifted away from battles between cavalrymen to close combat among infantry, *tachi* mountings accordingly fell into decline. Beginning about the middle of the fifteenth century, the *uchigatana* mounting—in which the sword is worn through the belt, with the cutting edge facing up—became the preferred style since it is easier to carry and remove when worn on foot.

Mountings constructed to be worn through the belt had been made as early as the late twelfth century, as confirmed by a scene in the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* (Handscroll of the Tale of the Courtier Ban Dainagon). In the scroll, which illustrates a Heian-period episode when a government minister set fire to Kyōto's Ōtemmon gate, a lower-class policeman (*shimobe*) can be seen using such a mounting (fig. 4.6). An extant example housed in the Kasuga-taisha, Nara, is kept in a wooden box that bears an inscription in black ink: *HONO KASUGA ONSHA KEN HITOKOSHI* (one sword dedicated to Kasuga shrine), and *HISHIZUKURI UCHIGATANA SHINZAI NO TAME HONO KUDANNOGOTOKU SHITOKU NINEN SHOGATSU NIJUNINICHI* (*kaō*) (one *hishizukuri* [diamond-patterned] *uchigatana* dedicated as a treasure of the *kami* on the twenty-second day of the first month of the second year of the Shitoku era [1385]). Written by Hamuro Nagamune, a high-ranking aristocrat in the service of the emperor, the inscription establishes that this type of mounting was referred to as "*uchigatana*" by at least 1385, in the late Nanbokuchō period. The mounting has a *tsuba* but no *ashi-kanamono*. The blade is *hira-zukuri* (flat and ridgeless), and the cutting edge is about 38 centimeters long. An additional inscription on the box indicates that the *uchigatana* had descended in Nagamune's family from his ancestor, Mitsuyori, who lived during the late Heian period. Although the blade dates to the late Heian, the *uchigatana* mounting was likely provided by Nagamune at the time he dedicated the sword to the shrine. This type of *uchigatana* mounting had been in use since the Heian period, but *uchigatana* mountings for blades longer than 60 centimeters became widely used in place of *tachi*-style mountings only about the middle of the fifteenth century. The likely reason for this, as noted above, was the shift from mounted warfare to battle between large armies of low-ranking infantry, or *ashigaru*. Thereafter, the basic form of the *uchigatana* mounting remained relatively unchanged until the mid-nineteenth century, when the introduction of Western military equipment occasionally influenced the styles of some traditional Japanese forms (see, e.g., cat. no. 133).

### *DAISHŌ* MOUNTINGS

In the late Muromachi period, it became customary for samurai to wear a pair of swords, one long and one short, referred to together as a *daishō goshirae* ("large and small mounting"). The longer sword is called a *katana*, and the shorter one is the *wakizashi*, or companion sword. When samurai of the Edo period made their obligatory biennial

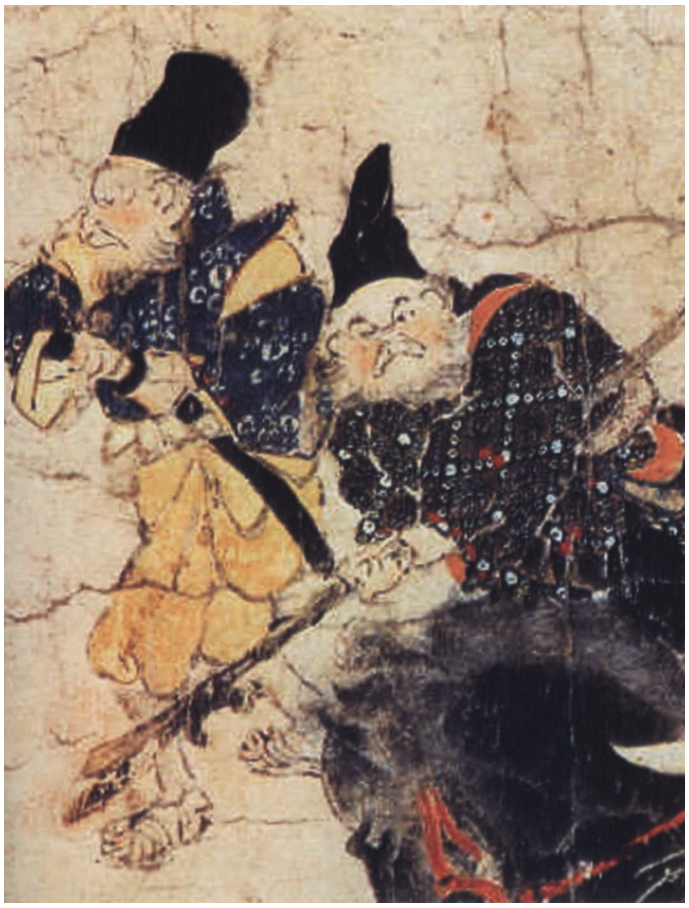


Fig. 4.6. Detail of the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, showing an *uchigatana*-style mounting. Handscroll, late Heian period, 12th century. Ink and color on paper. Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo

procession to Edo (see cat. no. 210), they were required to wear a formal *daishō* pair of mountings (*shikisho no daishō*) (fig. 4.21). These sets, also worn on official ceremonial occasions, were typically black-lacquered and polished smooth in a style known as *roiro* ("wax-lacquered"). The *kojiri* (chape) of the *katana* scabbard was made in the *kiri* style (square cut), while that of the *wakizashi* was rounded. Formal *daishō* hilts were wrapped in white sharkskin and given a *kashira* (pommel cap) of black-lacquered horn, while the hilt was cross-bound with black silk braid. In other types of *daishō* mountings, the *kashira*, *fuchi*, and *tsuba* were made of various types of soft metals, such as *shibuichi* and *shakudō*, and the surface was given some type of decorative treatment, from polishing to a *nanako* ("fish roe") ground, made by punching a regularly granulated ground with a rounded, hollow-point fine punch to achieve a stippled surface. The *kozuka* and *kōgai* could also be embellished with *shakudō nanako* and an applied family heraldic insignia (*mon*). Other types of decoration reflected the tastes of the individual samurai.

Many long *katana* and *wakizashi* continued to be worn until the second half of the seventeenth century, in some ways as a sign of military preparedness even as the relative peace of the Edo period began to take hold. The Tokugawa government viewed these longer swords as inappropriate for peacetime, however. From a clause in the *Tokugawa Jikki* (Chronicles of the Tokugawa Shogunate) dated the eighteenth day of the seventh month in the second year of the Shōhō era (1645), we know that in that year the Edo *bakufu* restricted the length of *katana* to about 85 centimeters (or 2 *shaku* 7–8 *sun*) and *wakizashi* to no more than 55 centimeters (1 *shaku* 8–9 *sun*).

During the Edo period, samurai were the only class permitted to wear a *daishō*. Otherwise, the wearing of any type of sword was restricted to people with a *myoji taito* ("sword-wearing surname"), meaning those who warranted the privilege by dint of special service to the government and who were thereby granted use of a special family name. Of those permitted to do so—including farmers, craftsmen, or members of the merchant classes—most wore a single *wakizashi* (fig. 4.2m). These became important status symbols for wealthier members of that class, who availed themselves of the best craftsmen and metalworkers and commissioned sumptuous mountings and fittings that are the quintessence of Edo-period luxury.

### *KOSHIGATANA* MOUNTINGS

Many mountings made for *tantō* (daggers) have no *tsuba*: a type referred to as an *aikuchi* mounting. A scene illustrated in the *Heiji monogatari ekotoba* (Handscroll of the Tale of Heiji)—which was compiled about the middle to end of the thirteenth century and illustrates the Heiji Rebellion of 1159–60, in which Minamoto no Yoshitomo lay siege to Kyōto—shows a samurai wearing an *ō-yoroi* armor and carrying a *tachi* mounting together with an *aikuchi*-type mounting through his belt (fig. 4.7). This type of short mounting, called a *koshigatana*, existed as early as the Kamakura and Nanbokuchō periods (see cat. nos. 115, 119, 124, 198) and was used continually through the late Edo period (cat. no. 130; fig. 4.20). Most extant *koshigatana* mountings date from the Edo period, however. There was also a type of *tantō* mounting with a *tsuba*, called a *chiisagatana* (small *katana*) (cat. no. 118; fig. 4.2p). This type was in use from the Muromachi period on, but few examples have survived.

### FITTINGS

Most sword fittings that are the subject of appreciation by connoisseurs today were made for mountings worn through the belt, such as *uchigatana* and *koshigatana*. Although there are fittings that date to before the beginning of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (ca. 1568)—toward the end of the Sengoku-jidai (Age of Wars), when Japan was gradually being unified—most were made during the Momoyama and Edo periods. For the earliest examples, it seems that the same maker was often responsible for all of the metal components, as had been standard practice with early *tachi* mountings. Later craftsmen specialized as makers of either *tsuba* (sword guards) or *ko-dōgu* ("small fittings"). Sword fittings are thus generally divided into one of those two categories.

Contrary to some popular assumptions, the *tsuba* is designed not to guard the back of the hands but to protect the palms by preventing the hands from slipping down the hilt and onto the blade (recently the *tsuba* has sometimes mistakenly been referred to as a "hand guard"). *Tsuba* also aid the overall balance of the sword. The pieces classified as *ko-dōgu* include a variety of different pieces. The *kogatanazuka*, more commonly called the *kozuka*, is the handle of the *kogatana*—a utility knife fitted into the side of the scabbard—and is usually made of metal, although wood and horn were occasionally used. The *kozuka* was often made to match the *kōgai*, an implement about the size of a letter-opener that was used to dress the hair. The *kozuka* and *kōgai* were sometimes made in a matching set of fittings along with a pair of *menuki*: small fixtures bound onto the hilt for decoration and to prevent the hands from slipping; this set is called a *mitokoromono*. The *fuchi* (collar) and *kashira* (pommel cap) were likewise often made in matching sets, called *fuchigashira*. A set of fittings comprising the three components of a *mitokoromono* as well as a *fuchigashira* is referred to as a *yotokoromono*.

Typical ground materials for *ko-dōgu* as well as *tsuba* include gold, silver, copper, *shakudō*, *shibuichi*, *shinchū* (brass), and

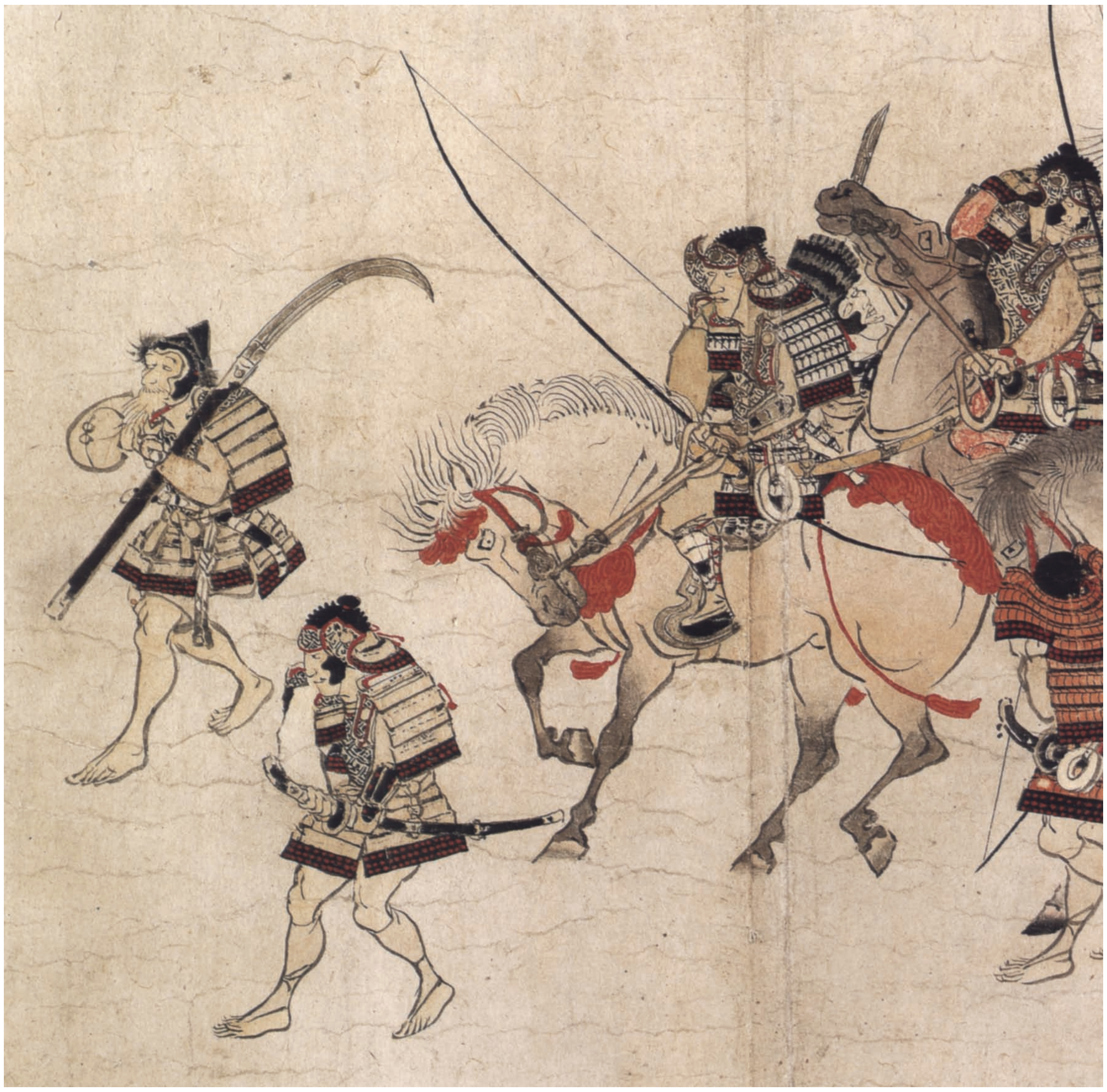


Fig. 4.7. Detail of *Night Attack on the Sanjō Palace*, from the *Heiji monogatari ekotoba*, showing rider wearing a *tachi*-style mounting together with an *aikuchi*-type mounting through his belt. Handscroll, Kamakura period, second half of the 13th century. Ink and color on paper. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Fenollosa-Weld Collection (11.4000)

iron. The surface of the ground was worked in a variety of techniques, from *nanako-ji* (see cat. no. 165), described above, to hammering (*tsuchime-ji*) (see cat. no. 143) and carving with a fine chisel in order to achieve a surface pattern that resembles scattered stones (*ishime-ji*). The ground could also be polished to a level, mirrorlike smoothness (*migaki-ji*) (see cat. no. 161). Fittings were then further embellished by several types of carving (*hori* or *bori*), such as *taka-bori*, in which the design is sculpted in relatively high relief (see cat. no. 162), *sukidashi-bori*, which involves cutting away ground to create a kind of low relief (*ukibori*) (see cat. no. 140), *kebori* ("hair carving") (see cat. no. 157), in which fine lines are engraved with a V-shaped chisel, *katakiri-bori* ("oblique chisel carving") (see cat. no. 162), in which one side of a carved line is made at a sharper angle than the other, and *ji-zukashi* (piercing or openwork) (see cat. no. 138). Additional decorative effects were achieved with *zōgan* (inlay) and *iro-e*, a term that comprises several different techniques of decoration using applied colored metals.

### FITTINGS FROM BEFORE THE AZUCHI-MOMOYAMA PERIOD

Few *tsuba* or other fittings survive from mountings made before the sixteenth century, and almost all that do are unsigned. Many of the early iron *tsuba* used on *uchigatana* mountings are decorated with a few simple motifs pierced through the iron ground. These are thought to have been made by swordsmiths or armor makers and are thus known as *tosho tsuba* ("swordsmith's *tsuba*") (see cat. no. 137) or *katchūshi tsuba* ("armorer's *tsuba*") (see cat. no. 136). Other types of early fittings include *ji-zukashi tsuba*, in which the background is removed in a kind of openwork design, such as Owari *sukashi* (cat. no. 138) and *kyo-sukashi* (cat. no. 139); *ko-shoami tsuba* and similar pieces decorated with *nunome zōgan* ("textile inlay"), made by mechanically adhering gold leaf to a ground roughened by cross-hatching, analogous to what in Western terminology is referred to as damascening; and Kamakura *tsuba* (see cat. no. 140), which often have designs made using *sukidashi-bori* on an iron ground. There are also iron *tsuba* with motifs inlaid in brass, such as Ōnin work (see cat. no. 141) and *Ḥeianjo zōgan tsuba*.

Some fittings were made of ground metals other than iron, such as *yamagane* (poorly refined copper) or *shakudō*, and were embellished with *taka-bori* (high-relief) designs of flowers and grasses and applied silver and gold decoration. These are known as *Ko-kinko* ("old metal worker's") and *Ko*-Mino ("old Mino school") work (see cat. no. 145).

### THE GOTŌ FAMILY

About the middle of the fifteenth century, the Gotō school of fittings makers emerged in Kyōto. Founded by Gotō Yūjō (see cat. nos. 119, 146), who was retained by Ashikaga Yoshimasa, the eighth Ashikaga shogun (r. 1449–73), the Gotō family would go on to become the leading makers of sword fittings for the next four hundred years. More refined than the earlier *Ko-kinko* and *Ko*-Mino work, the fittings made by the early Gotō masters typically have pictorial designs in *taka-bori* with gold and silver detailing on a *shakudō nanako* ground. Successive generations of the family were retained by subsequent rulers—from the Ashikaga shoguns to Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the Tokugawa shoguns—as each came successively into power. In addition to fittings, the Gotō family made *oban*, the largest gold coins in the world, and were thus known as *oban yaku* ("makers of gold coins"). They were also assayers (*fundo yaku*) of bullion for the *oban* and the *koban* (a smaller coin) and for the shogun's gold reserves. By virtue of their control of the gold treasury, the Gotō wielded considerable power within the governments of the Oda, Toyotomi, and Tokugawa families. They flourished for seventeen generations—the last in the lineage was Gotō Tenjo, who was active during the Bakumatsu and into the Meiji period—and through their longevity they exerted an enormous influence throughout the world of Japanese metalworking.

The work of the Gotō school is sometimes called *ie-bori* (literally "house carving"), a reference to the fact that they were the officially sanctioned fittings makers for the samurai classes and for the shogunate. Beginning with Yūjō, the founder, the great makers in the school are Sōjō (see cat. no. 148), Jōshin (see cat. no. 149), Kōjō, Kenjō, and Tsujō. The earliest signed Gotō fittings are those made by the fourth-generation master, Kōjō, active during the Momoyama period. Kōjō's younger sister, Myoshō, married Kanō Motonobu, son of the founder of the Kanō school of painting and himself one of its greatest masters. (Like the Gotō, the Kanō school artists were retained by Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the Tokugawa family throughout the Edo period.) It is evident from Kōjō's work that he based many of his fitting designs on paintings by Motonobu. Kōjō was also a key figure in the establishment of Japan's currency system, described above.

### FITTINGS FROM THE AZUCHI-MOMOYAMA PERIOD

The first signed *tsuba* are undated but are thought to have been made from about the late Muromachi to the Momoyama period. They are signed by such makers as Nobuie (cat. nos. 142, 143), Kaneie, and Umetada Myōju, among others. Nobuie followed the traditions of the Owari school, characterized by pierced designs in thick iron plate (cat. no. 142) and graphically strong pieces with characters inscribed in *kebori* (cat. no. 143). Kaneie, active in Fushimi, in Yamashiro province, specialized in iron *tsuba* with pictorial designs made in *taka-bori* with *iro-e* and *zōgan* (inlay) (cat. no. 144). A recent theory suggests that Kaneie was active during the Momoyama and early Edo periods. Umetada Myōju, who lived at Nishijin, in Kyōto, during the early Edo period, is most famous as a swordsmith (see cat. no. 99), but he also made *tsuba*, many decorated with designs similar to those found on Momoyama-period screen and wall paintings. He typically worked with colored metals such as gold, silver, copper, and *shakudō* on a ground of iron, *shakudō*, or *shinchū* (brass). Hirata Dōjin applied cloisonné techniques to sword fittings and became well known for the exquisite beauty of his works (see cat. no. 152). He was retained by the Tokugawa government in 1612, and his descendants were retained by the Tokugawa family throughout the remainder of the Edo period.

### FITTINGS FROM THE EDO PERIOD

#### HIGO *KINKO*

Beginning about the seventeenth century, in the early Edo period, the Hosokawa, a prominent daimyo family and the lords of Higo domain (in present-day Kumamoto Prefecture), retained four schools of metalworkers: the Hayashi, Hirata, Nishigaki, and Shimizu. The works of these makers are referred to collectively as Higo *kinko*. Hayashi Matashichi, the first generation of that family, was renowned for his characteristic use of *nunome zōgan* and pierced decoration on a well-forged iron ground (see cat. no. 154). Hirata Hikozo made *tsuba* with designs that are both abstract and classical, using copper, iron, and *yamagane*. Nishigaki Kanshiro, a pupil of Hirata Hikozo, made fittings in copper and brass that were strongly influenced by Hikozo as well as pierced iron *tsuba* similar to those of the Hayashi school. Shimizu Jingo, another pupil of Hirata Hikozo and the founder of the Shimizu school, specialized in grand depictions of animals, fish, and similar motifs in brass *suemon zōgan* (inset appliqué) on an iron ground (see cat. no. 155). The skill and artistic quality of these schools tended to diminish over successive generations, but there were exceptions. In the late Edo period, for example, Fukanobu and his son Rakuju of the Kamiyoshi school, following the traditions of the Hayashi, produced fittings whose artistry rivals that of the school's founder, Matashichi.

### AKASAKA *TSUBA*

The *tsuba* made in Akasaka, a district of Edo, from about the early to late Edo period were highly regarded among samurai. Akasaka pieces typically have an iron ground pierced with designs of grasses, flowers, and trees that recall the landscape of the Musashino plain, an upland area outside of the city. Additional details were often worked in fine *kebori* (line engraving). With their rather rounded, thick *mimi* (rim) and broad piercings, Akasaka *tsuba* combine the powerful "artlessness" of Owari *tsuba* with the refinement of *kyo-sukashi* work.

There are no extant signed pieces by the first three generations of Akasaka makers: Tadamasa, the founder; the second generation, also named Tadamasa; and the third, Tadatora. Their works, known as *Ko*-Akasaka ("early" Akasaka), are highly prized. There are known signed *tsuba* by the fourth generation, Tadatoki, who inscribed his works *BUSHU (NO) JU AKASAKA HIKOJURO TADATOKI SAKU* (Made by Akasaka Hikojirō Tadatoki, resident of Bushū [Edo]). Following his example, all of the successive generations of Akasaka artists used the words "Bushu (no) ju Akasaka" in their signatures.

Until about the early seventeenth century the main centers of production of iron *tsuba* with pierced decoration (*sukashi*) were Kyōto and Owari. The Akasaka school eventually surpassed both, probably because many Akasaka pieces were carried back to the provinces by samurai returning from Edo under the Tokugawa government's *sankin kotai* system, which obliged them to spend every other year in Edo (see cat. no. 210).

### *MACHI-BORI*

The Gotō school thrived for centuries as the "official" metalworkers of the Tokugawa shogunate. As time progressed, however, its artisans adhered too rigidly to tradition and—as with the Kanō school of painting—their works gradually came to lack variation and elegance. Yokoya Sōmin (see cat. nos. 158, 159), a fittings maker whose father, it is said, was affiliated with the Gotō school, decided to abandon the old *ie-bori* tradition in favor of a new pictorial approach using *katakiri-bori* (oblique chiseling) and other techniques to emulate the brushstrokes of ink painting. Sōmin's bold, realistic designs are characterized by the use of combinations of different metals such as gold, silver, *shakudō*, *shibuichi*, and copper to achieve luxurious, sculptural compositions. His works were highly regarded among the newly rich landowners and merchants of the Genroku era (ca. 1680–1709), a time, often referred to as the "golden age" of the Edo period, when prolonged peace and rapid commerical expansion led to the flowering of a vibrant bourgeois culture in Japan's urban centers. Sōmin enjoyed a close relationship with the painter Hanabusa Itchō (1652–1724), who was trained in the Kanō school but eventually developed a less constrained, more poetic style of his own, and he modeled some of his fitting designs on Itchō's works.

Sōmin's fittings are referred to as *machi-bori* ("town carving") as opposed to the earlier *ie-bori* ("house carving"). Whereas *ie-bori* artists specialized in making *mitokoromono* for the samurai class, *machi-bori* artists made exquisite fittings—but very few *mitokoromono*—for samurai as well as for wealthier members of the merchant class. They also made *tsuba*, which the earlier generations of the Gotō generally did not, and they employed a wider range of materials, including *hiirodo*, a type of copper that is dark red. The numerous branches of Sōmin's school—the Yanagawa, Inagawa, Kikuchi, Kikuoka, Omori (see cat. no. 163), Ishiguro, Iwamoto (see cat. no. 164), and the Kono, among others—flourished until the Bakumatsu, the waning years of the Tokugawa shogunate, and through their prolific output made a lasting contribution to the world of Japanese metalworking.

The Nara school, another representative group of *machi-bori* artists active about the same time as Sōmin, was centered on the activity of three outstanding craftsmen: Nara Toshinaga, Sugiura Jōi (see cat. no. 161), and Tsuchiya Yasuchika (see cat. no. 160), all of whom made realistic, pictorial works of exceptional quality but who also pioneered a more abstract style. One of the artists who emerged from the Toshinaga school was Hamano Masayuki (also known as Shozui) (see cat. no. 162), whose pictorial renderings of traditional Chinese tales achieved wide popularity. His Hamano school flourished until the Bakumatsu. Other well-regarded *machi-bori* schools include the Murakami and Tanaka, in Edo, and the Ichinomiya (see cat. no. 165) and Ōtsuki (see cat. no. 166) in Kyōto. Prominent among regional metalworkers were the Oda school in Satsuma, the Chōshū group of *tsuba* makers in Chōshū, the Mogarashi (or Soheishi) group of Omi, the Kunitomo group at Ise, the Mito *kinko* metalworkers in Mito, the Shōnai *kinko* of Dewa (see cat. no. 133), and the *zōgan* specialists of Kaga, who made splendid sword fittings decorated with flowers and insects using the same *hira-zōgan* technique they employed to embellish stirrups and other equipment.

During the Bakumatsu, fierce competition arose among metalworkers for the lucrative tourist trade—especially following the opening of Japan to foreigners in 1854—

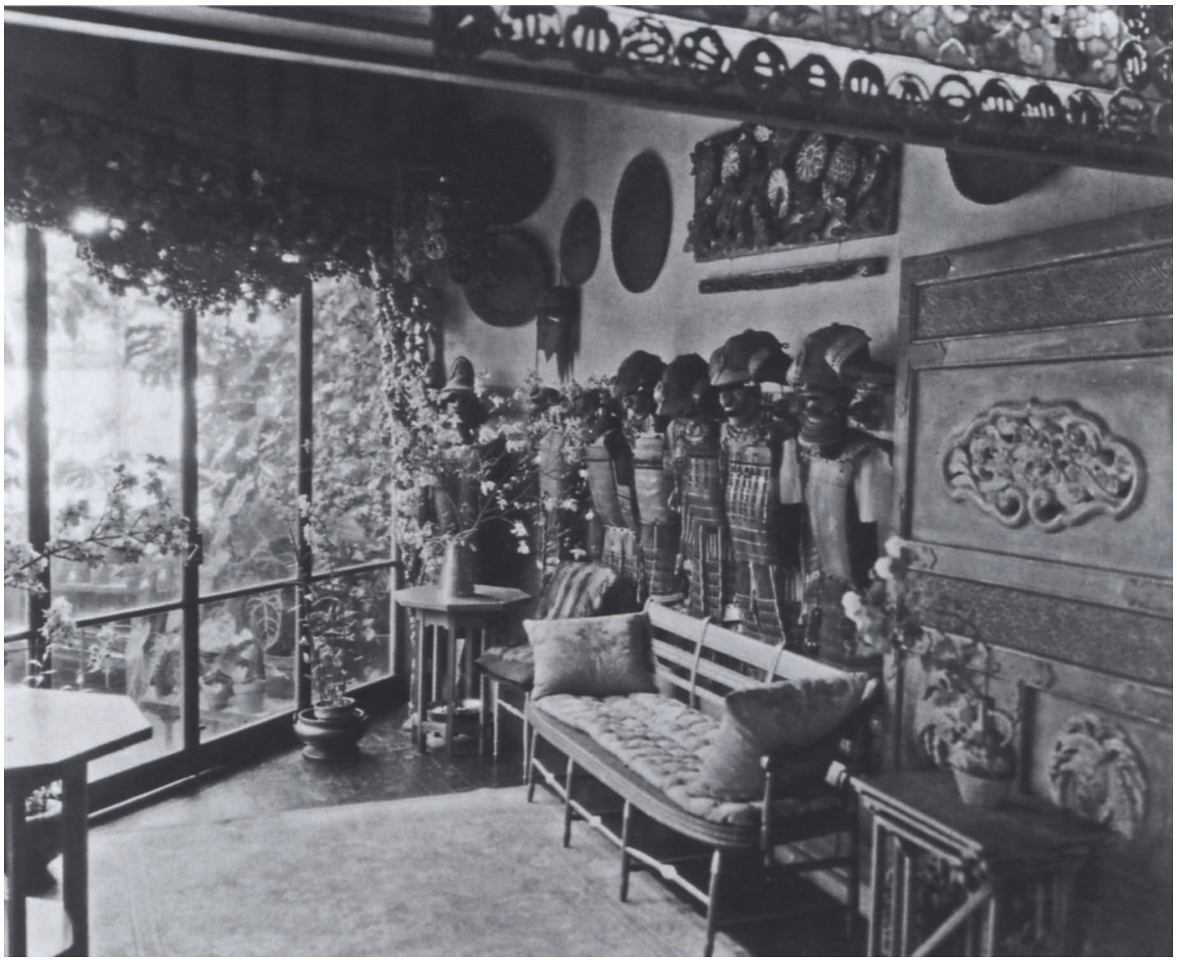


Fig.4.8. *Tsuba* (sword guards) and Japanese armor in the den of Laurelton Hall, Oyster Bay, New York, ca. 1920s. Gelatin silver print. Photograph by David Aronow. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Robert Koch, 1978 (1978.646.19)

spurring some to excesses of decorative splendor that often resulted in diminished artistic quality. The Hachirobei family, a branch of the Gotō school in Kyōto, was an exception to that trend. One of its artists, Gotō Ichijō (1791–1876), worked in an elegant style notable for its detailed, realistic compositions (see cat. nos. 131, 132, 167, 168). His school developed many other fine artists, such as Funada Ikkin and Hashimoto Isshi. Also active in Kyōto was Kanō Natsuō (1828–1898), originally of the Ōtsuki school, whose detailed, realistic masterpieces compare favorably with the work of the period's greatest painters (see cat. nos. 135, 170). Ichijō and Natsuō are considered the last of Japan's great decorative metalworkers.

In 1868, as Kanō Natsuō was reaching creative maturity, the last Tokugawa ruler, Yoshinobu (1837–1913), having resigned as shogun the year before, was stripped of his remaining powers by the emperor. This reinstatement of traditional imperial authority, known as the Meiji Restoration, resulted in the military classes—including daimyo and samurai—losing many of their ancient privileges. In the ninth year of the Meiji era (1876), a law was passed prohibiting the wearing of swords, further hastening the decline of the samurai. As demand for sword fittings plummeted, metalworkers put their refined skills to use making

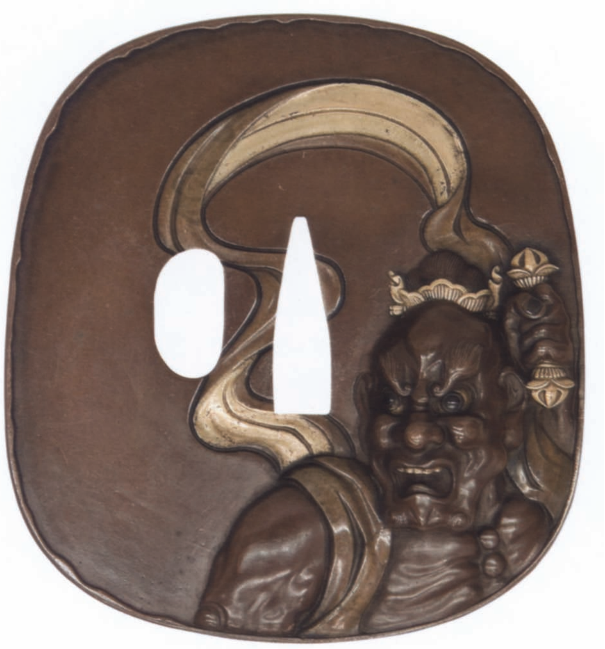


Fig. 4.9. *Hamamono*-type *tsuba* (sword guard), 19th century. Copper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.790)

vases, tobacco pouches, watches, belt fittings, and other quotidian items. As the preeminent master of his time, Kanō Natsuō became a mentor and teacher to many of Japan's younger metalworkers, and his pupils achieved great renown at international expositions in Europe and America during the late nineteenth century, notably the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris. One of the results of exposing Western audiences to Japanese artistic traditions was the birth of Japonisme—an international artistic movement based on traditional Japanese themes and techinques—which contributed measurably to the growth of Japan's economy before the advent of industrialization.

### *HAMAMONO*

Lewis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933), son of the founder of Tiffany and Company and later the firm's art director, was an ardent collector of Japanese sword fittings. A photograph from the 1920s shows a number of Tiffany's *tsuba*—along with armors and some of the other 2,500 works in his collection of Japanese objects—displayed in the den of Laurelton Hall, his estate in Oyster Bay, New York (fig. 4.8). Edward C. Moore (1827–1891), chief designer at Tiffany and Company from 1868 to 1891 and himself a *tsuba* enthusiast, bequeathed more than three hundred sword fittings and mountings to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In fact, many of the products Moore designed for Tiffany reflect the distinct influence of his Japanese collection, which he frequently used as reference material. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Japanese sword fittings made a significant contribution to the company's signature decorative style.

Among the *tsuba* collected by Tiffany and Moore are pieces referred to today as *hamamono*, which were intentionally made too large for practical use (fig. 4.9). Appreciated as ornaments and paperweights, *hamamono* are often decorated with fanciful designs in fine inlay. (The term "*hamamono*" probably derives from the fact that most of them were exported from Yokohama.) Most *hamamono tsuba* are inscribed with the names of great Edo-period sword fittings makers such as Yokoya Sōmin, Nara Toshinaga, Tsuchiya Yasuchika, Hamano Shozui, and Ishiguro Masatsune, but their style of manufacture suggests that they were more likely made by Mito artisans, such as Okawa Teiken and the metalworkers of the Edo Hamano group. Although large numbers of *hamamono* can be found in American and European collections, there are comparatively few in Japan, suggesting that they were made largely for export. As noted above, Japan was industrially underdeveloped in the early Meiji period, and exports of traditional products, including silk wares, provided much-needed foreign currency.

In 1889, the twenty-second year of the Meiji era, the Tokyo School of Fine Arts was established at Ueno, and Kanō Natsuō was appointed its first professor of metal sculpture. The following year, the Emperor Meiji established an official system of imperial artists (*Teishitsu Gigei-in*) in order to foster the work of craftsmen and painters such as Natsuō, who was one of the first so named. Natsuō, in turn, nurtured other great artists, including Unno Shomin, Kagawa Katsuhiro, and Tsukada Shukyo, thus helping transform the traditional craft of making sword fittings into modern decorative metalwork.

## 110.

## *Hyōgo gusari tachi* mounting with pine and wisteria motifs

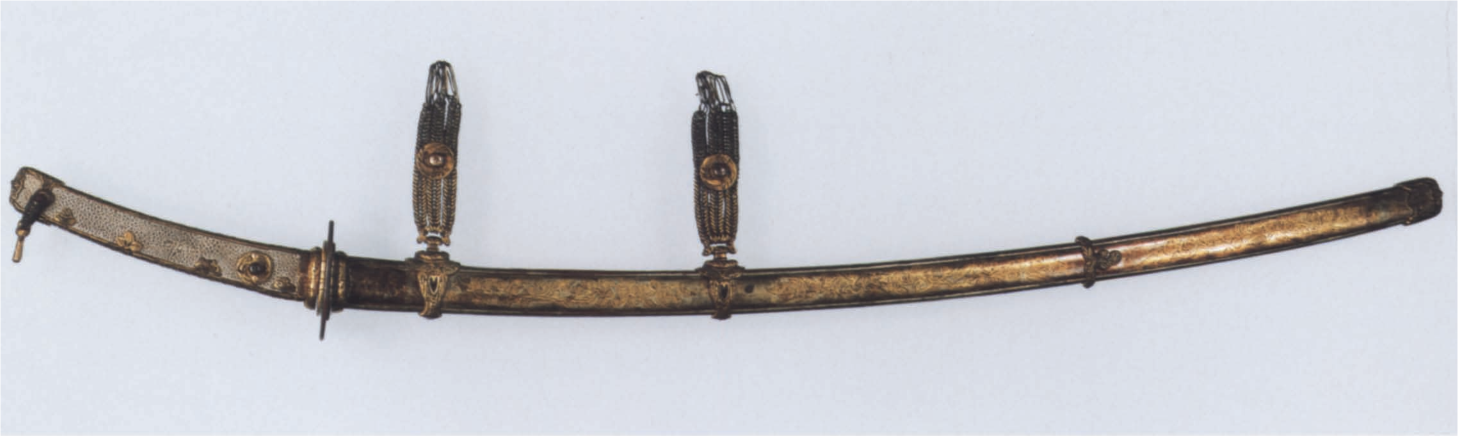
## 重要文化財 松藤文兵庫鎖太刀

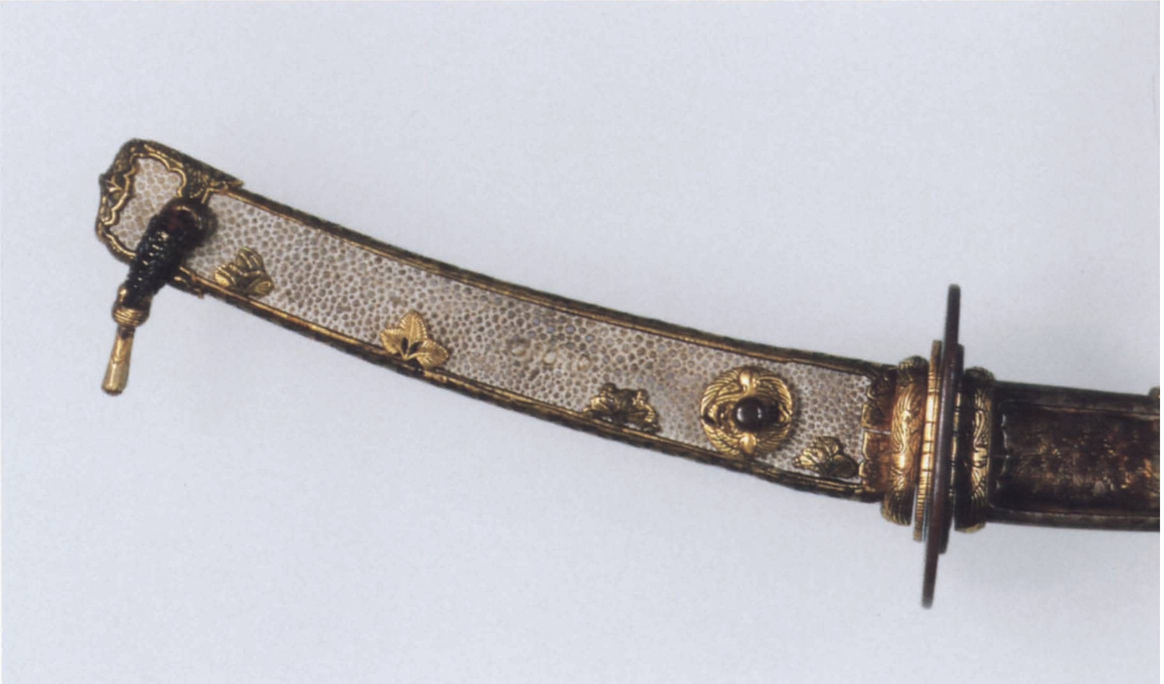
Kamakura period, 13th century
Wood, copper, gold, silver, and sharkskin
L. 96 cm (37¾ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

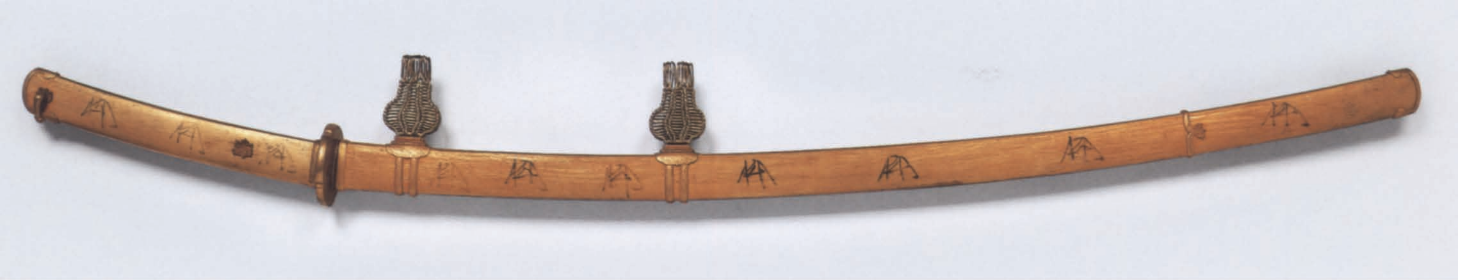
The *hyōgo gusari tachi*, a type of sword mounting popular during the late Heian and Kamakura periods, is characterized by the use of chains for the *obi-tori*—the fittings from which the sword was carried suspended from the waist—instead of silk or leather cords. Such mountings were originally favored for practical use by the nobility and high-class samurai. Beginning in the middle of the Kamakura period, as they grew increasingly rich in decoration, many were used as dedications to Shinto shrines.

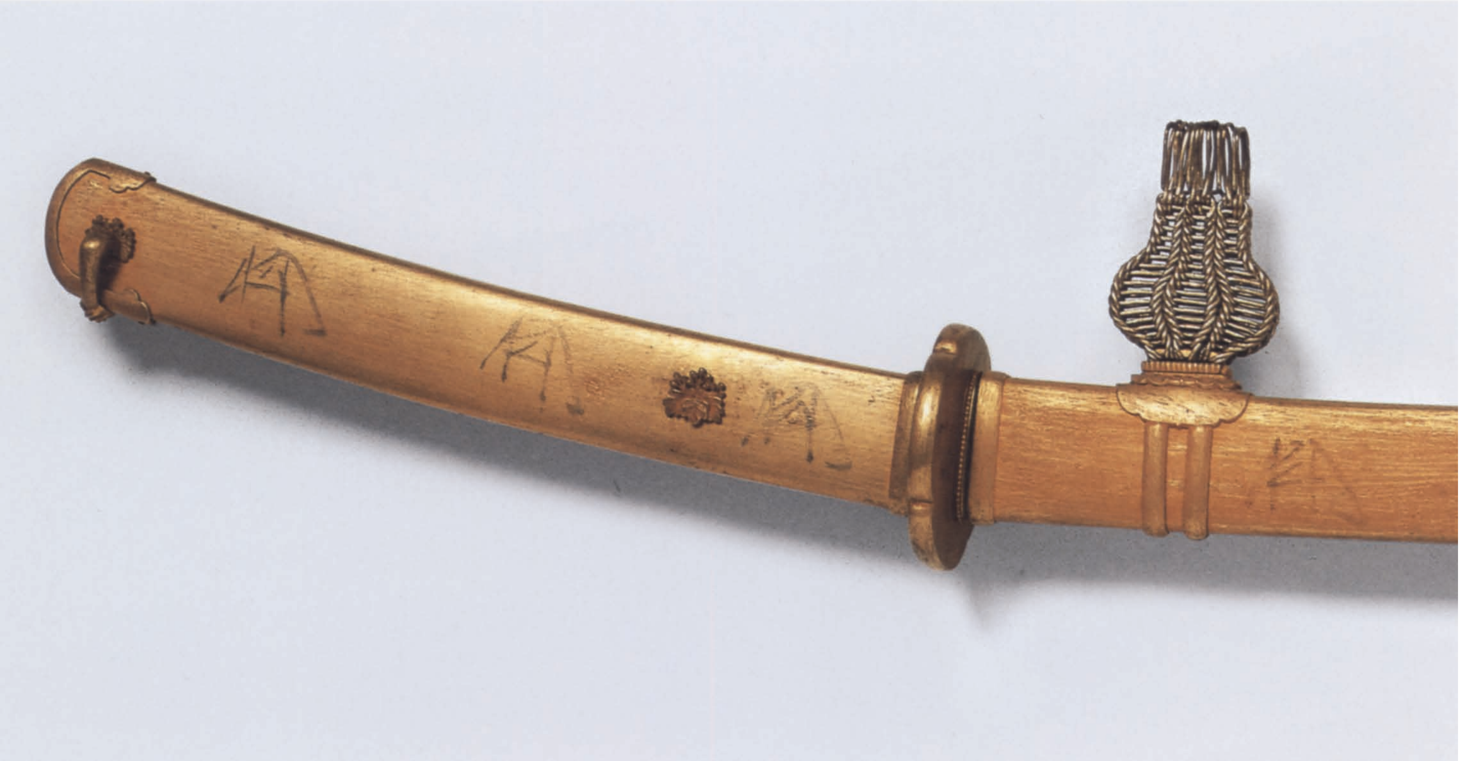
Both the hilt and scabbard of this highly decorated example have gilt-copper *fukurin* (rimmed edges). The sides of the scabbard are clad in silvered copper sheet engraved with young pines; the decorative rivets and other metal fittings on the hilt are also carved with young pines in high relief. The *ō-seppa* (large spacers on either side of the *tsuba*, or sword guard) are pierced with pine and wisteria motifs, and the *obi-tori* fittings are similarly embellished with wisteria. The mounting was formerly in the collection of the Takatsu Bunka Kaikan, Kyōto.

IT









**111.**

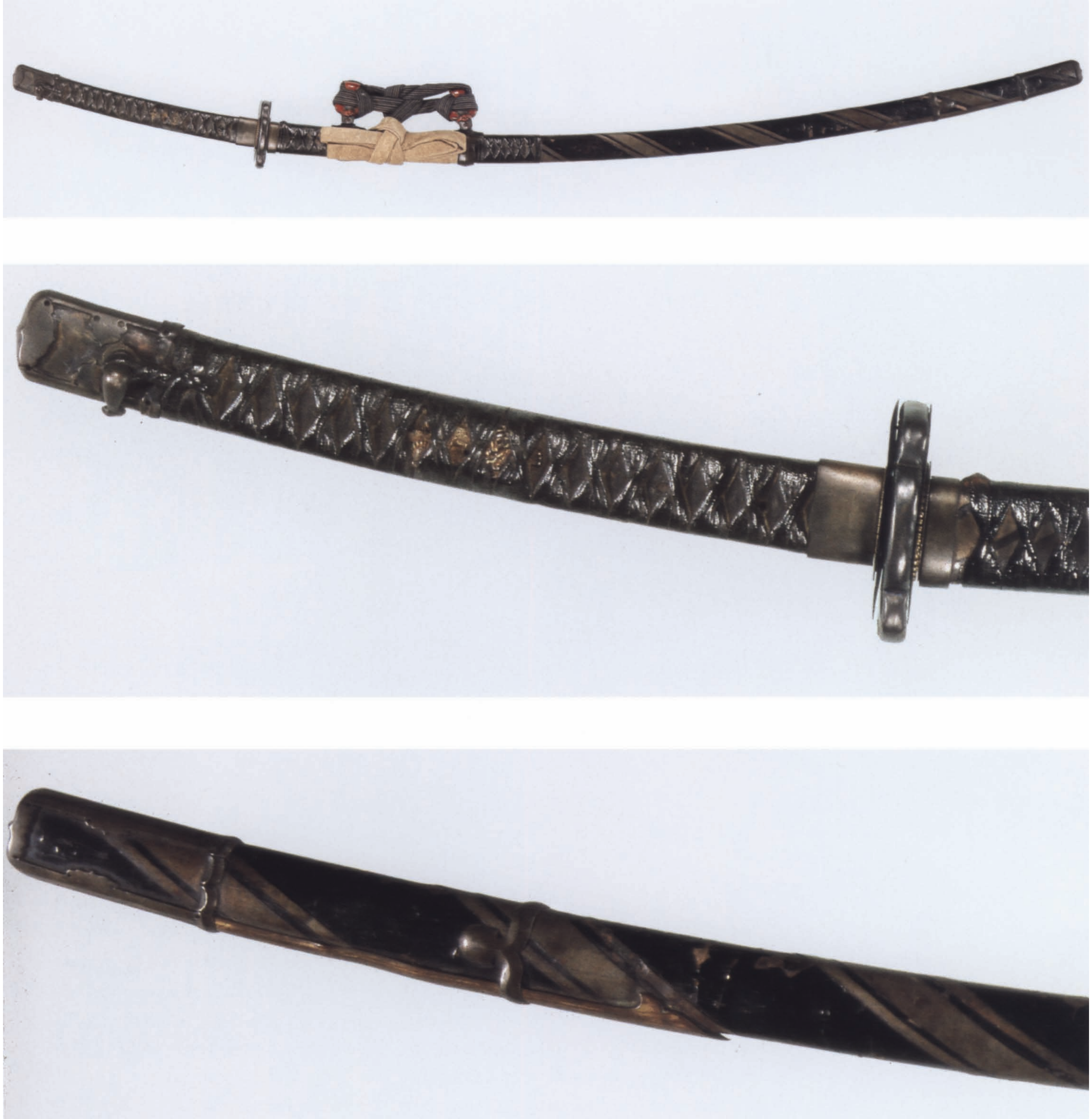
*Hyōgo gusari tachi* mounting

国宝　金装花押散兵庫鎖太刀

Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Wood, silver, gold, and copper
L. 126 cm (49⅝ in.)
Kasuga-taisha Shrine, Nara
**National Treasure**

This type of *tachi* mounting was made to be suspended from the belt by two *obi-tori* fittings made of chain. Originally practical pieces of military equipment, they were known as *hyōgu gusari tachi* ("military equipment chain *tachi*"). Later, in the Edo period, the word "*hyōgu*" became corrupted, and such mountings came to be known by a slightly different name: *hyōgo gusari tachi* ("military store chain *tachi*"). Examples that survive from the Heian and Kamakura periods (see cat. no. 110) were suspended from sets of four parallel rows of chains. The *obi-tori* fittings on this Nanbokuchō-period example are fixed in a "turnip" shape, however, preventing it from being handled as freely as Kamakura-period pieces, an indication of the transition from a practical to a more formal use in dedications to shrines and temples. (A similar mounting is preserved in the Futaarazan Jinja, a shrine in Tochigi Prefecture.)

The *tachi* blade in this mounting is unsigned, but it is inscribed with the date 1363; the mounting is assumed to have been made about that time. According to records of the Kasuga Taisha, the shrine in Nara where the mounting is preserved, it was dedicated by the third shogun of the Muromachi period, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (r. 1367–95). It is covered overall with silver and gilding, and the file marks of the finish are still clearly visible. The *kaō* (symbol or monogram used as a seal) inscribed in ink along the hilt and scabbard is believed to be that used by the Ashikaga clan during Yoshimitsu's rule. HK



**112.**

### Black-lacquered *hirumaki no tachi* mounting with a spiral-wound, silvered-copper scabbard

### 重要文化財 黒漆銀銅蛭巻太刀

Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Wood, lacquer, silk, sharkskin, copper, and silvered and gilt copper
L. 154.4 cm (60¾ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

A broad strip of silvered copper is wrapped in a spiral around the black-lacquered scabbard of this mounting, with two narrower strips paralleling it on either side. The hilt is clad in metal sheet and crossbound with lacquered textile. The two gilt-copper *menuki* (ornamental hilt fittings) are in the form of *shishi*, leonine creatures from Chinese mythology. The scabbard has the same cross-binding as the hilt along the upper portion of its length. The metal fittings—the *kabuto-gane* (pommel cap), *fuchi* (collar), *seme-gane* (scabbard ring), and *ishizuki* (chape)—are all made of plain gilt copper.

*Tachi* mountings with metal wrapped in a spiral along the scabbard are known as *hirumaki* ("leech-wrapped"). Owing to their combination of durability and decoration, they were used for military mountings from the Heian through the Edo periods. The oldest known example, wound in copper, is in the Sanage-jinja, a shrine in Aichi Prefecture. Another example is the vermilion-lacquered, gold-wound *daishō* set that dates from the Momoyama period (cat. no. 122). The present example, with its great length, large hilt, and metal fittings, is a superb Nanbokuchō-period work and is in a fine state of preservation. It is said to have belonged to Nanbu Masanaga, who controlled Mutsu province (present-day Aomori Prefecture) during the Nanbokuchō period. It remained a treasure of the Nanbu house until the Edo period. HK

## 113.

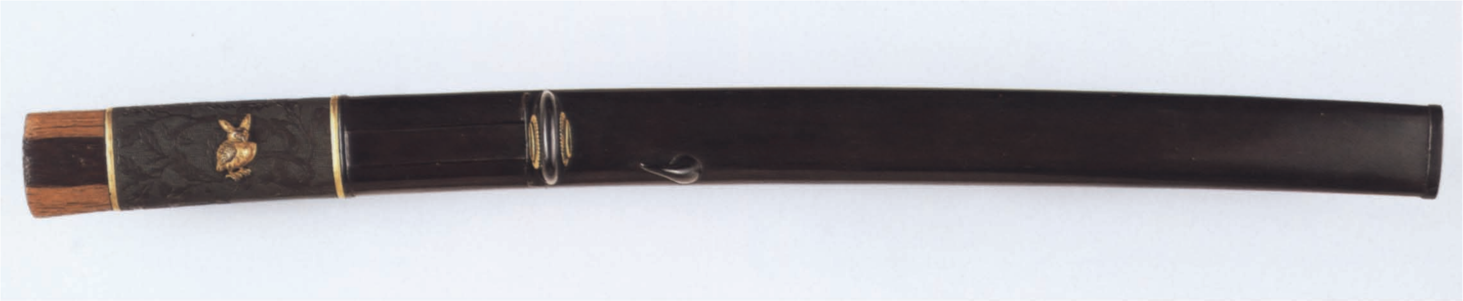
## *Koshigatana* mounting with an oak and horned-owl design

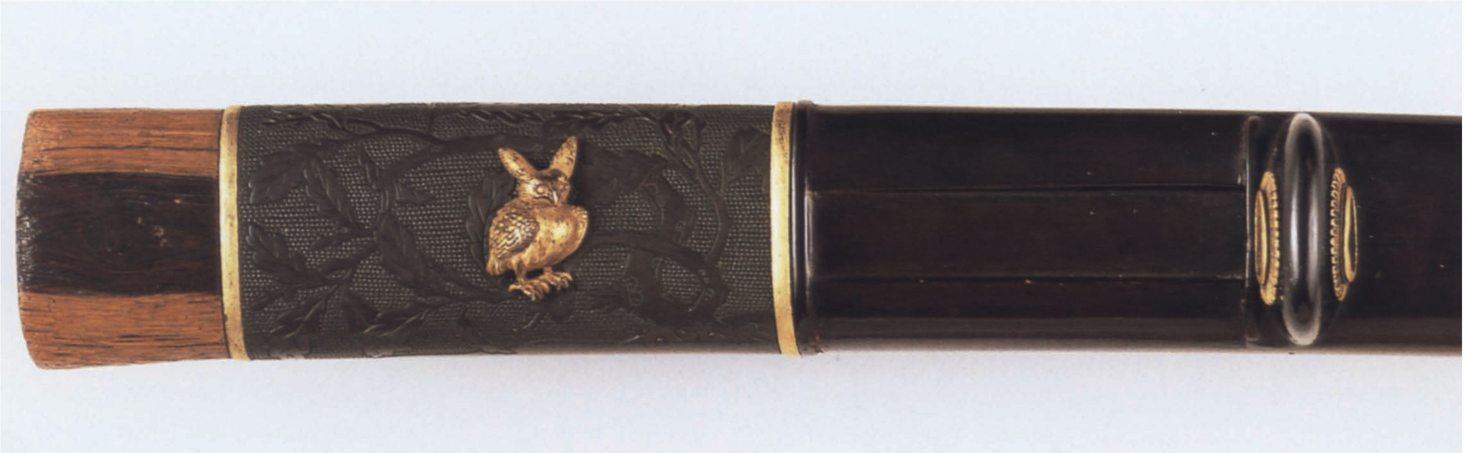
## 重要文化財 柏木菟腰刀

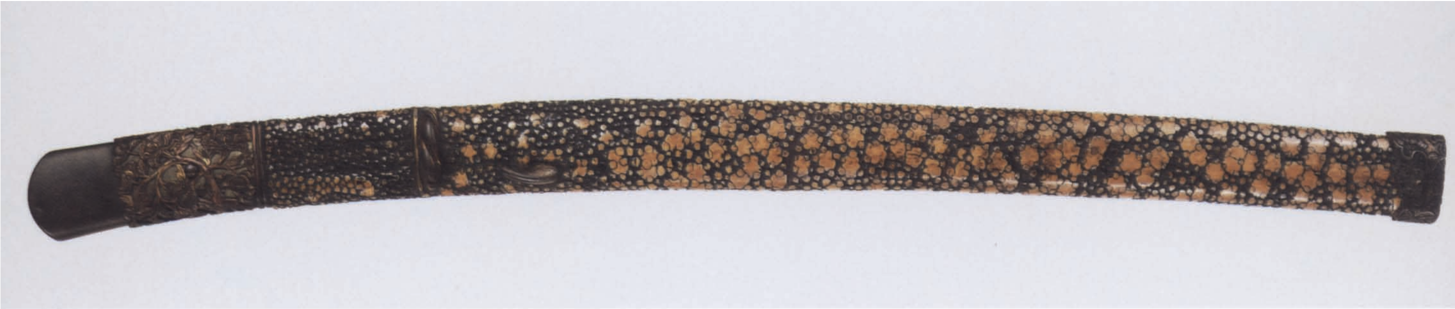
Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
*Shakudō*, gold, lacquer, and wood
L. 46 cm (18⅛ in.)
Kasuga-taisha Shrine, Nara
**Important Cultural Property**

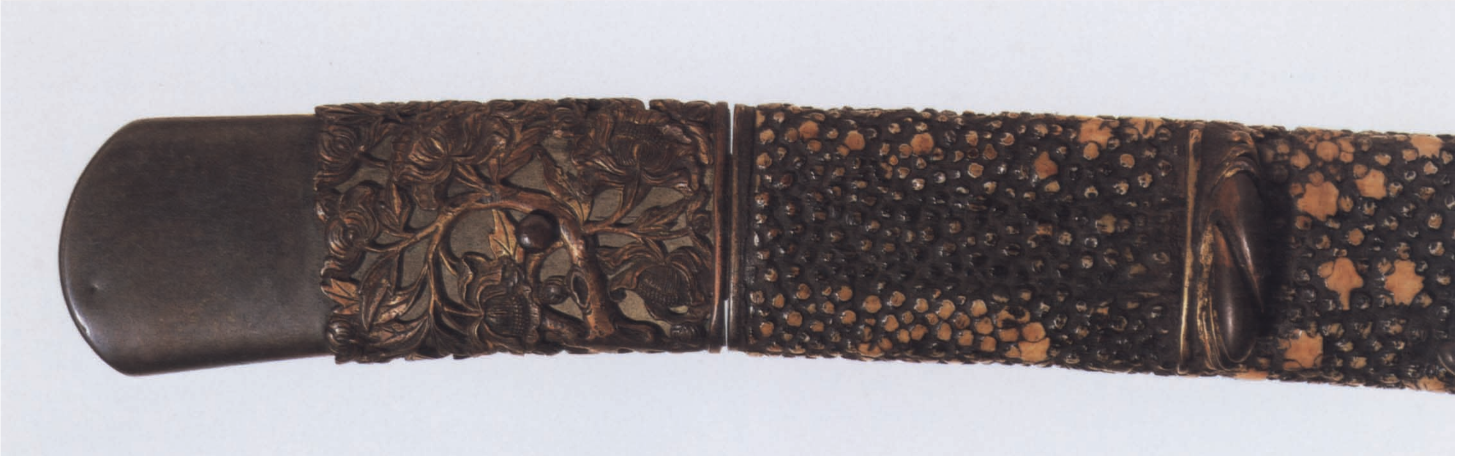
The scabbard of this *aikuchi*-type *koshigatana* mounting—which has no *tsuba*, or sword guard—is lacquered black, and the hilt is made of fragrant aloeswood. It is distinctive for having a band of *shakudō* around the hilt with a *nanako-ji* (punched dot) ground engraved with leafy oak boughs. Fitted onto the hilt are gold *menuki* carved in high relief in the form of horned owls, making it appear as if the owls are roosting on the oak. Characteristic of Nanbokuchō-period *koshigatana* (see also cat. no. 114), the wooden top of the hilt flares slightly, while the scabbard is thin and narrows in the direction of the cutting edge. The mounting is missing the original *kozuka* and *kōgai*.

HK









**114.**

## *Koshigatana* mounting with peonies and a plum blossom–patterned *same* (rayskin) scabbard

重要文化財
牡丹造梅花鮫皮鞘腰刀

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Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Wood, lacquer, rayskin, copper, and gold
L. 55 cm (21⅝ in.)
Kyoto National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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The type of sword referred to as a *koshigatana* was worn together with a *tachi* and in most cases was given a *tantō*-type mounting in the *aikuchi* style: with no *tsuba* (sword guard). In ancient times, the end of the hilt was made to fit into the mouth of the scabbard in a style known as *nomi-guchi*, as attested by surviving examples from the late Kamakura period.

This *aikuchi koshigatana* mounting is believed to have originally contained a *kōgai* (hairdressing tool) in a pocket on the side of the scabbard. Fitted around the hilt, which is clad in silvered-copper sheet, is a gilt-copper sleeve pierced on both sides with motifs of peonies and *shishi* (Chinese lions). Although there is no *kabuto-gane* (pommel cap), the hilt swells toward the top. The scabbard is wrapped in a type of *same* (ray- or sharkskin) known as *kairagizame* (plum blossom–patterned skin), which is lacquered black and polished down (*togidashi*) to create a nodular, floral design. The scabbard is also divided at about the position of the *kurigata* (cord knob) into two sections that have *same* of differently sized and patterned nodules. The section that extends to the mouth has relatively small nodules and fewer plum-blossom shapes, whereas the lower part of the scabbard is strikingly covered overall with large plum-blossom designs. The *kurigata* and *kaeri-zuno* (retaining hook) are made of gilt silver, and the *kojiri* (chape) is made of gilt-copper *nanako* (punched dots) with peonies carved in high relief.

The term "*same*" means sharkskin, but originally it was used to refer to either ray- or sharkskin because the ray itself was unknown in Japan. The *same* used here is the skin of the stingray, a highly valued commodity that was imported into Japan from Southeast Asia. Because *same* was so sought after by the highest-ranking samurai, on a number of occasions its importation was prohibited.

IT

## **115.**
## *Koshigatana* mounting
## 菊造腰刀

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Nanbokuchō period, 14th century
Wood, silver, copper, and gold
L. 42 cm (16½ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

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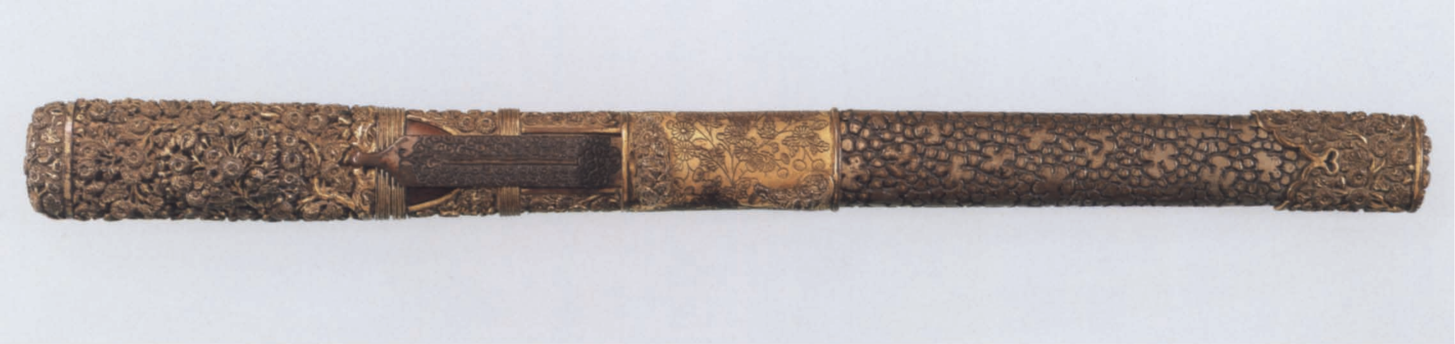
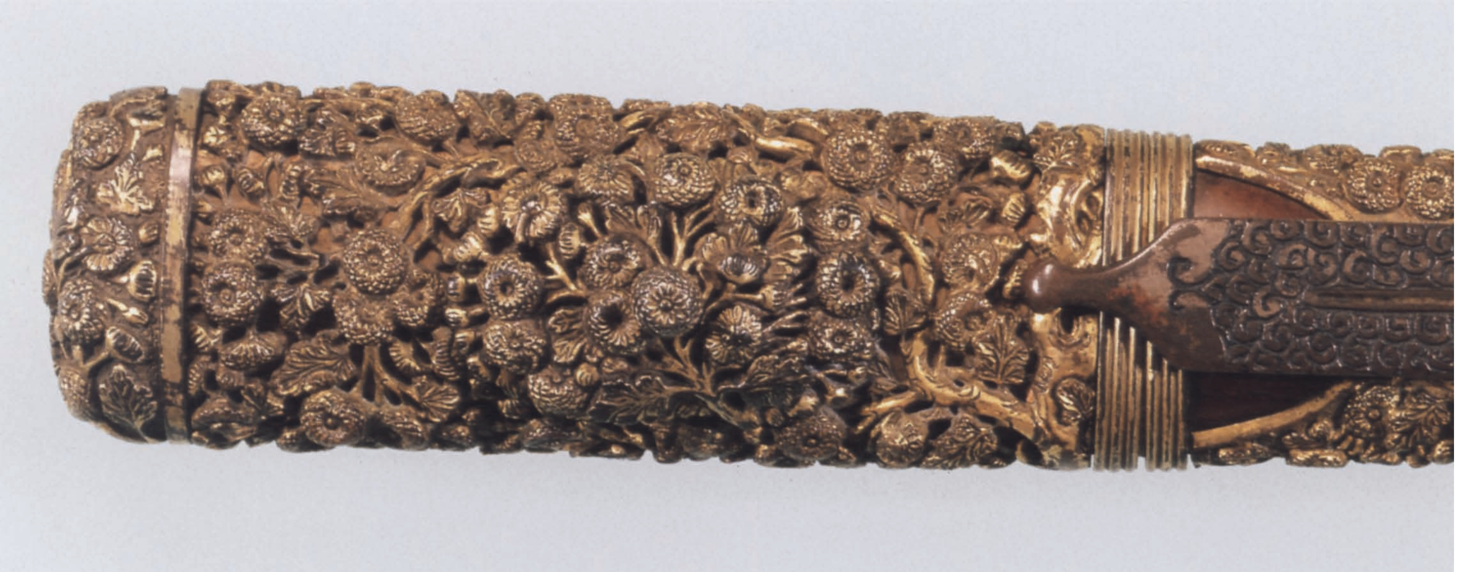
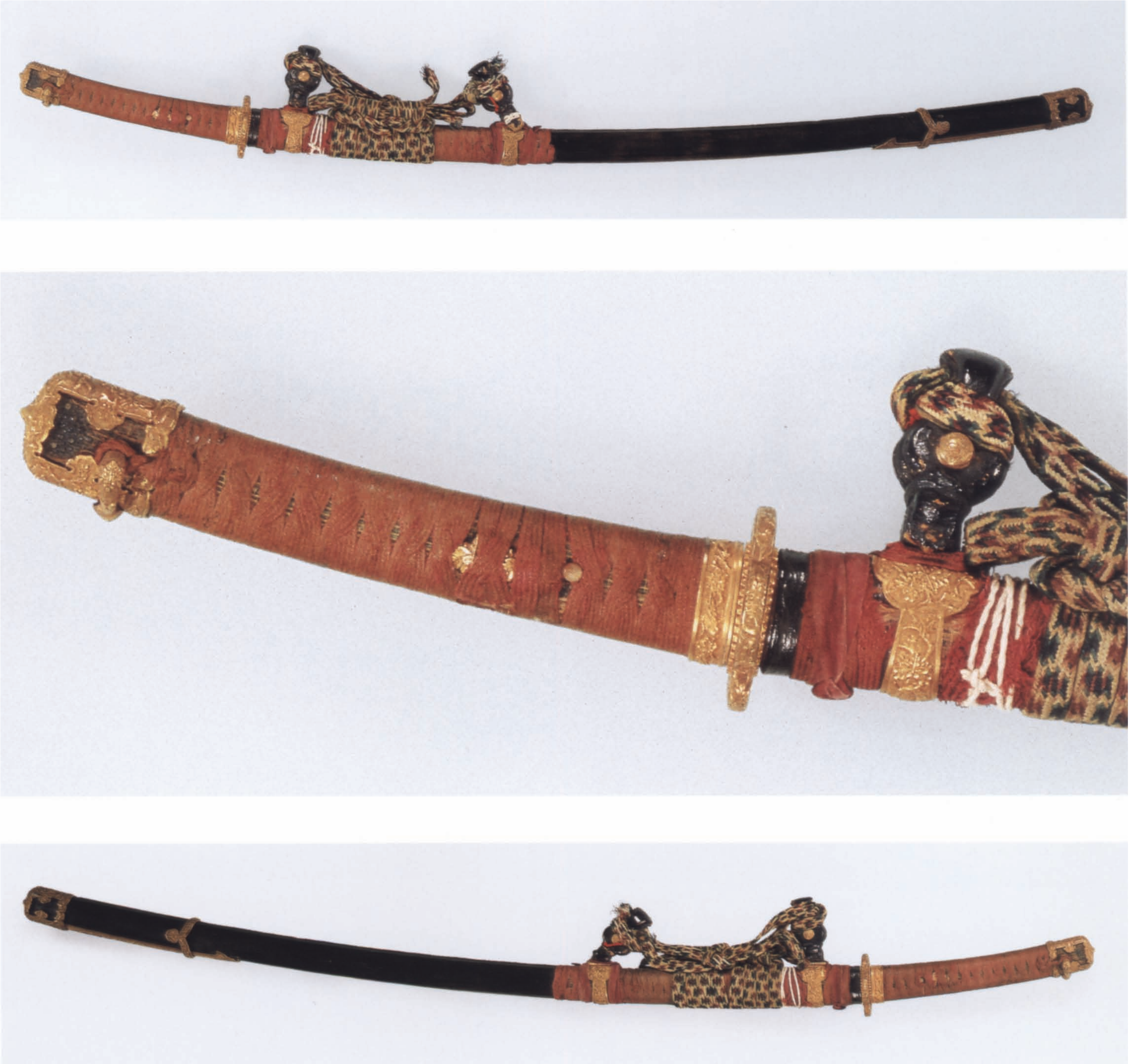
The hilt of this *koshigatana* mounting is clad in silver sheet decorated with high-relief gilt-copper chrysanthemums. Gilt-copper chrysanthemum *mon* (insignia) are also found on the *kashira* (pommel cap), *saya-guchi* (scabbard mouth), *kurigata* (cord knob), *kaeri-zuno* (retaining hook), and *kojiri* (chape). The scabbard is made of copper worked in a manner that simulates the appearance of *kairagizame*, which is rayfish skin polished smooth to create a design resembling plum blossoms. The mounting is an extremely luxurious example of a type fashionable from the Kamakura through the Muromachi period.

HK







### 116.

## Leather-wrapped *tachi* mounting with gold paulownia *mon* (insignia)

## 重要文化財
## 黒革包金桐文糸巻太刀

Muromachi period, 15th century
Wood, leather, gold, lacquer, copper, and silk
L. 102.7 cm (40⅜ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

Scabbards that were wrapped in leather in order to strengthen them were fashionable for military use during the Nanbokuchō and Muromachi periods. This particularly luxurious example belonged to the family of the Ashikaga shoguns. The *kabuto-gane* (pommel cap), *sarude* (a metal loop passing around the *kabuto-gane*), *fuchi-gane* (collar), *tsuba* (sword guard), *seme-gane* (scabbard ring), *ishizuki* (chape), and *shibahiki* (a metal fitting along the edge of the scabbard at the *ishizuki*) are all made of gold and decorated with chrysanthemum *mon* (insignia) carved in high relief on copper.

The mounting is known as "Kogane Zukuri" (Made of Gold), and its use outside the shogun's family was prohibited. It was passed down in the collection of the Uesugi family. HK

**117.**

## Black-lacquered *tachi* mounting with autumnal grasses

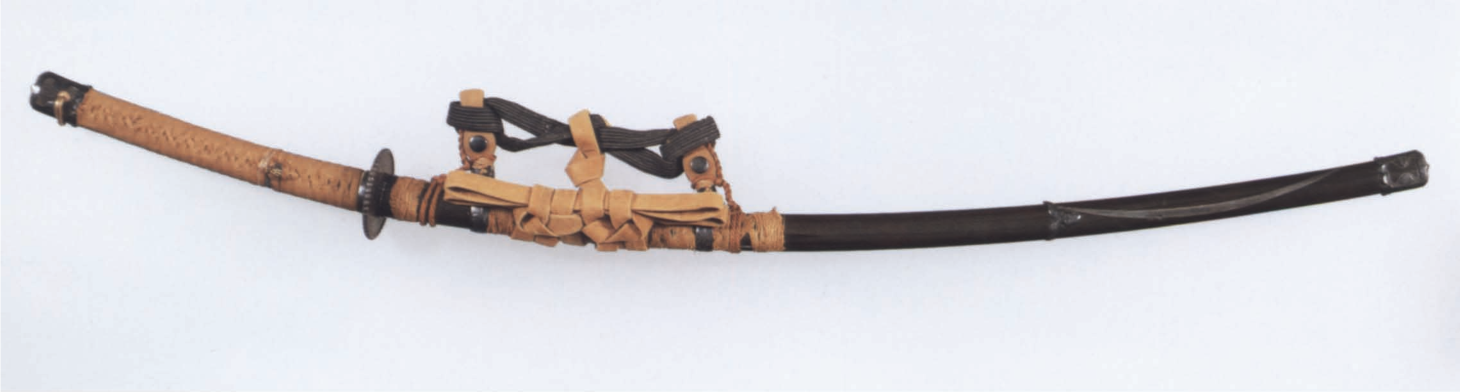
## 重要文化財 拵 秋草文黒漆太刀

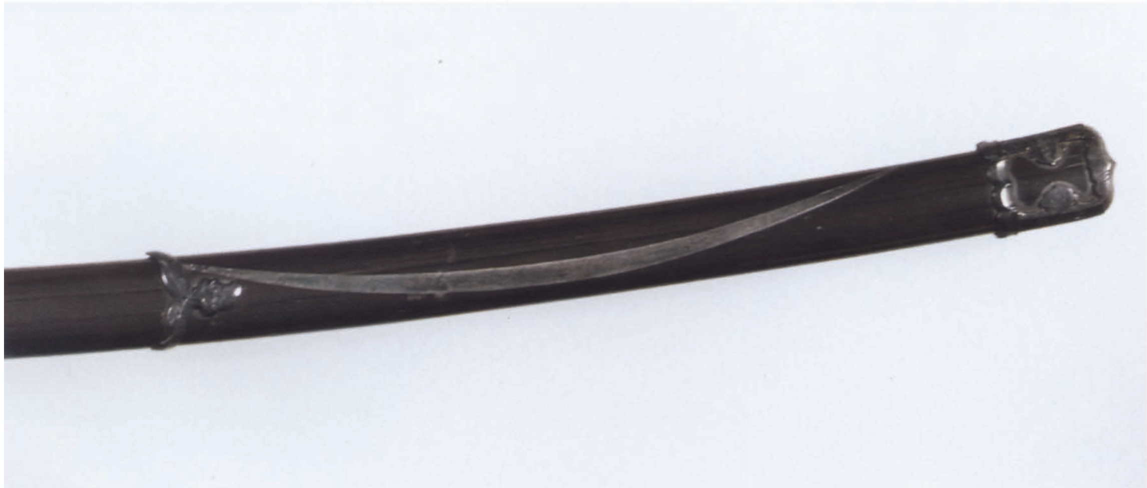
Muromachi period, 16th century
Silver, *shakudō*, lacquer, silk, and wood
L. 122 cm (48 in.)
Sano Art Museum, Shizuoka Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

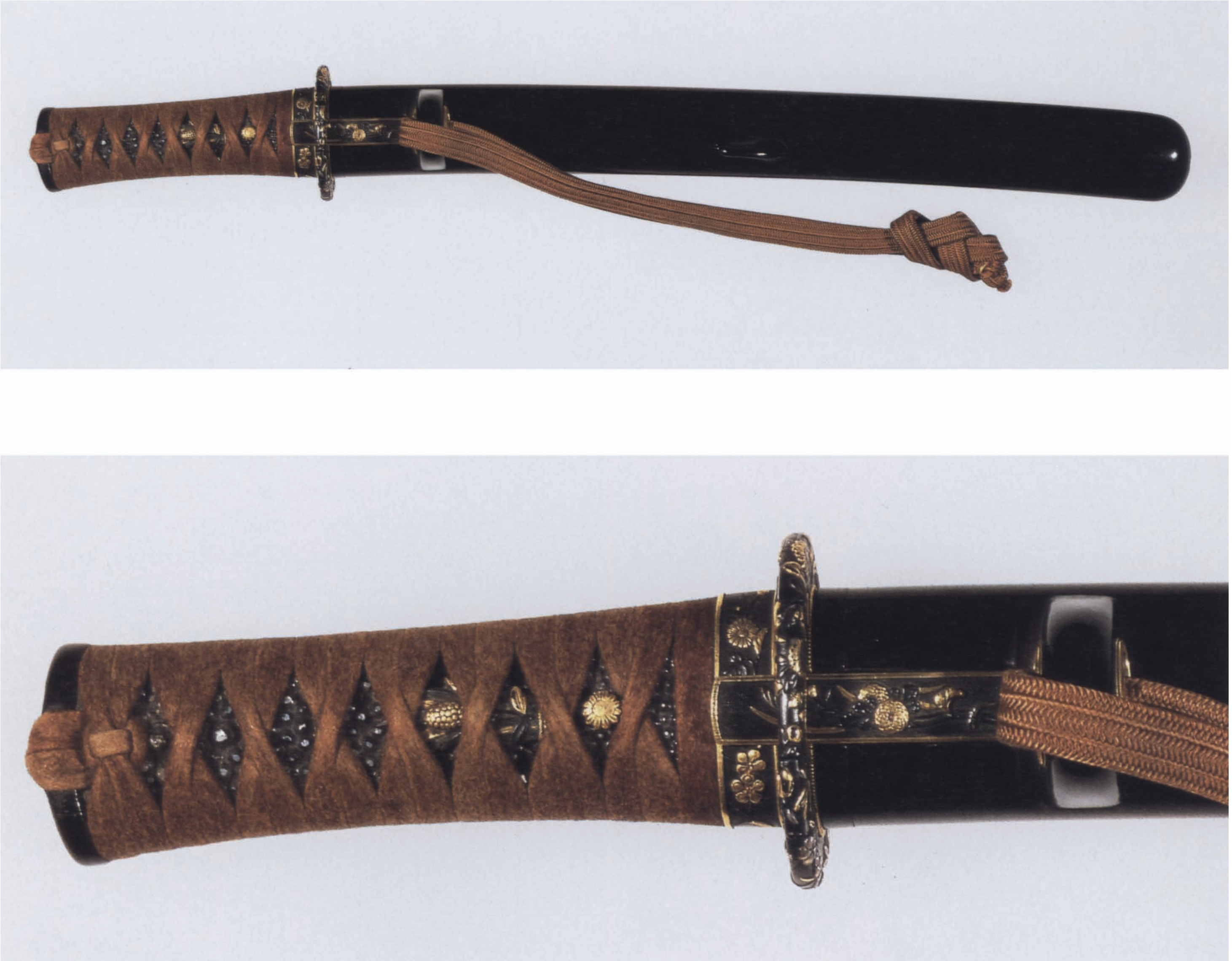
Beginning in the late Heian period, *tachi* mountings designed for actual use on the battlefield by samurai were lacquered black overall and the hilts were bound with cord or leather. This style continued to be used until the late Muromachi period even as the length of the hilt and the style and design of the metal fittings changed to reflect the tastes of a particular era or owner. The metal fittings on this example are made of plain, polished *shakudō* (*migakiji*) and are decorated in *kebori* (line engraving) with a motif of autumnal grasses, an elegant treatment in combination with the underlying black lacquer. On the scabbard, a large crescent moon is depicted in thin silver inlay (*hyomon*), a bold design doubtless made to the specifications of the owner. The silk cord on the hilt is dyed golden brown and bound so that the cords do not cross over, a method unique to the Muromachi period, making this piece an extremely valuable reference for mountings from that time.

The mounting holds a blade by Yukihira of Bungo province (present-day Ōita Prefecture) and was carried by Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578). The Uesugi clan, who administered the Kantō region during the Muromachi period, were highly regarded by the Ashikaga shoguns and, consequently, were presented with many famous swords. Records indicate that after Kenshin's death, his successor, Kagekatsu (1555–1623), selected thirty-five swords from among the many blades in Kenshin's collection, including this *tachi*.

WT







### 118.

## Black-lacquered *chiisagatana* mounting for a *tantō* (dagger) with a *tsuba* (sword guard)

国宝　黒漆小サ刀

Muromachi period, 16th century
Wood, lacquer, rayskin, leather, *shakudō*, gold, silver, and silk
L. 46.2 cm (18¼ in.)
Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore
**National Treasure**

This is the mounting for the *tantō* (dagger) by Kagemitsu (cat. no. 80). The scabbard is lacquered black, and the hilt is covered in black-lacquered *same* (rayskin) and bound in smoked leather (a modern replacement). The *menuki* (hilt fittings), in the form of bunches of flowers, are made of various colored metals, including *shakudō*, gold, and silver. The *kozuka* (utility knife handle) on the obverse of the scabbard is decorated with flowering chrysanthemums in *takabori iro-e* (high-relief applied colored metals) on a *shakudō nanako* ground; another *kozuka* on the *ura* (reverse) has chrysanthemums in *takabori iro-e* on a silver *namiji* ("wave" effect) ground.

There is no other example of a sword mounting with a *kozuka* on both sides. It is thus possible that originally there was a *kōgai* (hairdressing tool) on the *omote*, as is typically the case. The mounting was carried by Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578), a daimyo of the late Muromachi period, and is an important example of the style of *koshigatana*-type mountings prevalent at that time. HK

Gotō Yūjō

## 119.

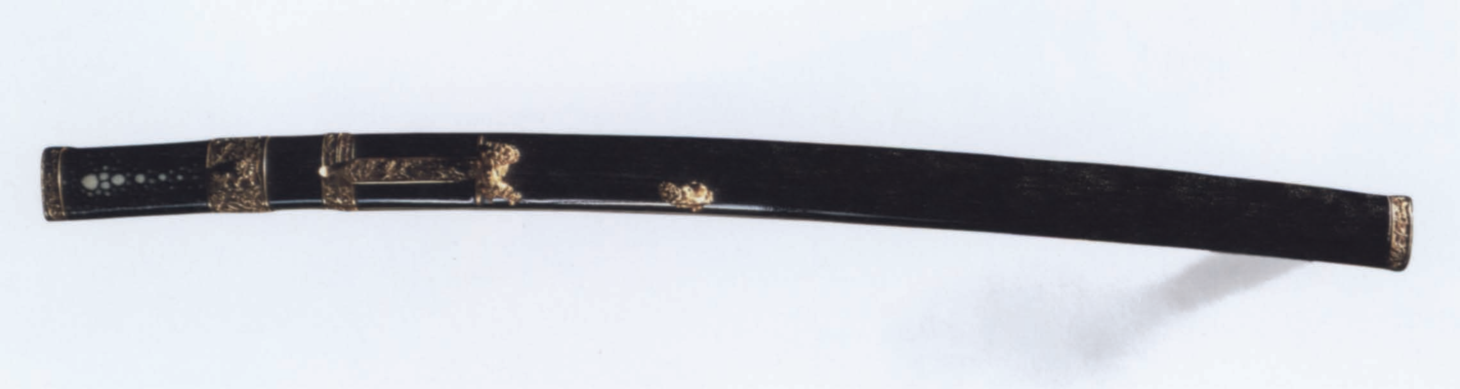
## *Koshigatana* mounting with *shishi* (Chinese lions) and peonies

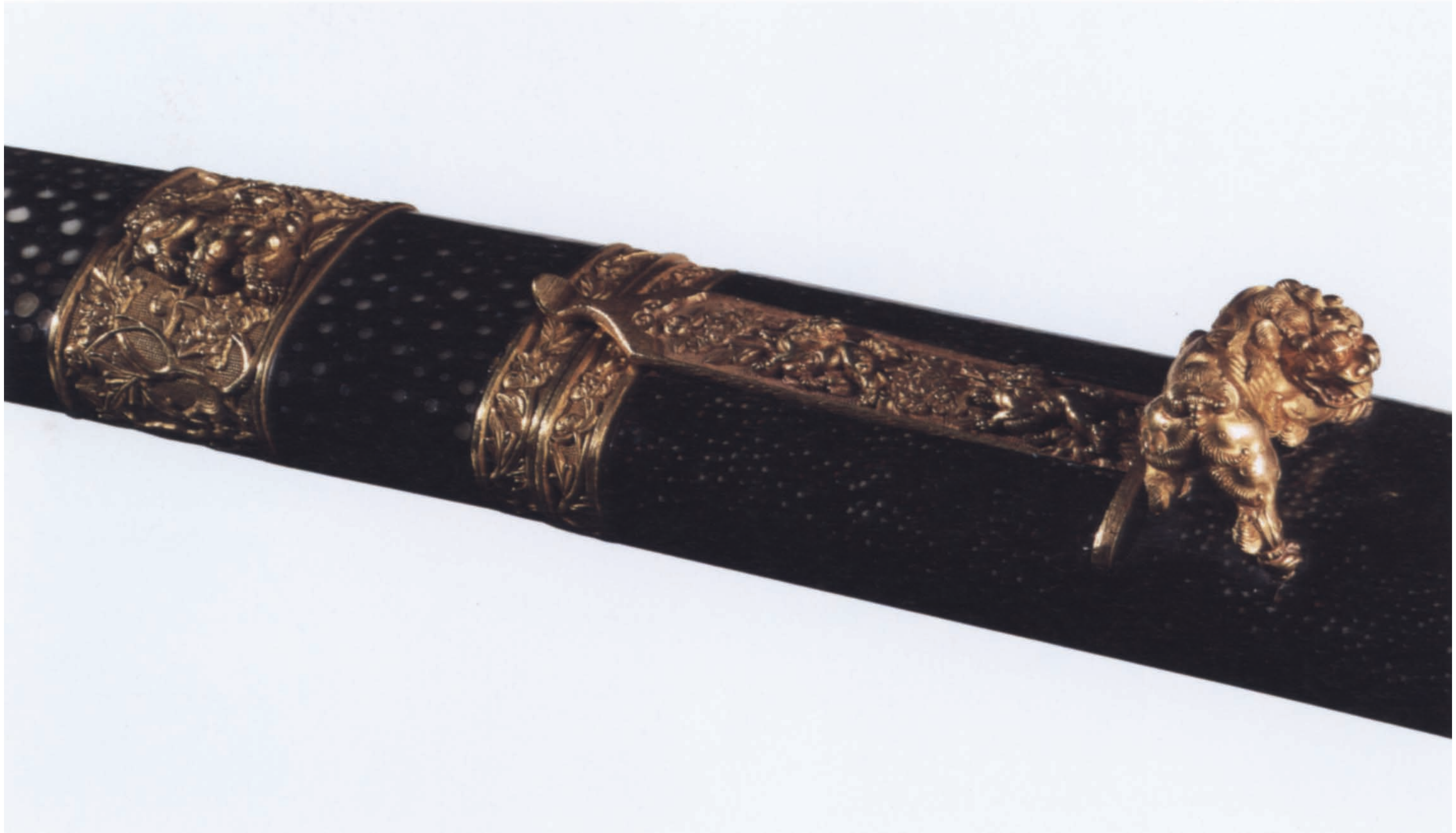
## 重要文化財 獅子牡丹造腰刀

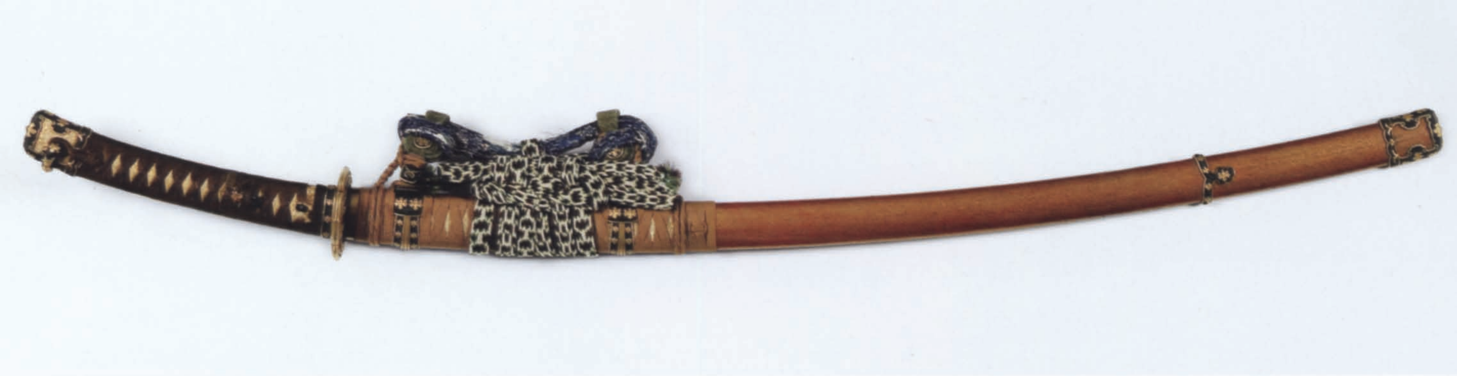
Mounting: Edo period, 17th century
Fittings: Muromachi period, 15th century
Wood, rayskin, gold, and lacquer
L. 60 cm (23⅝ in.)
Maeda Ikutokukai Foundation, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

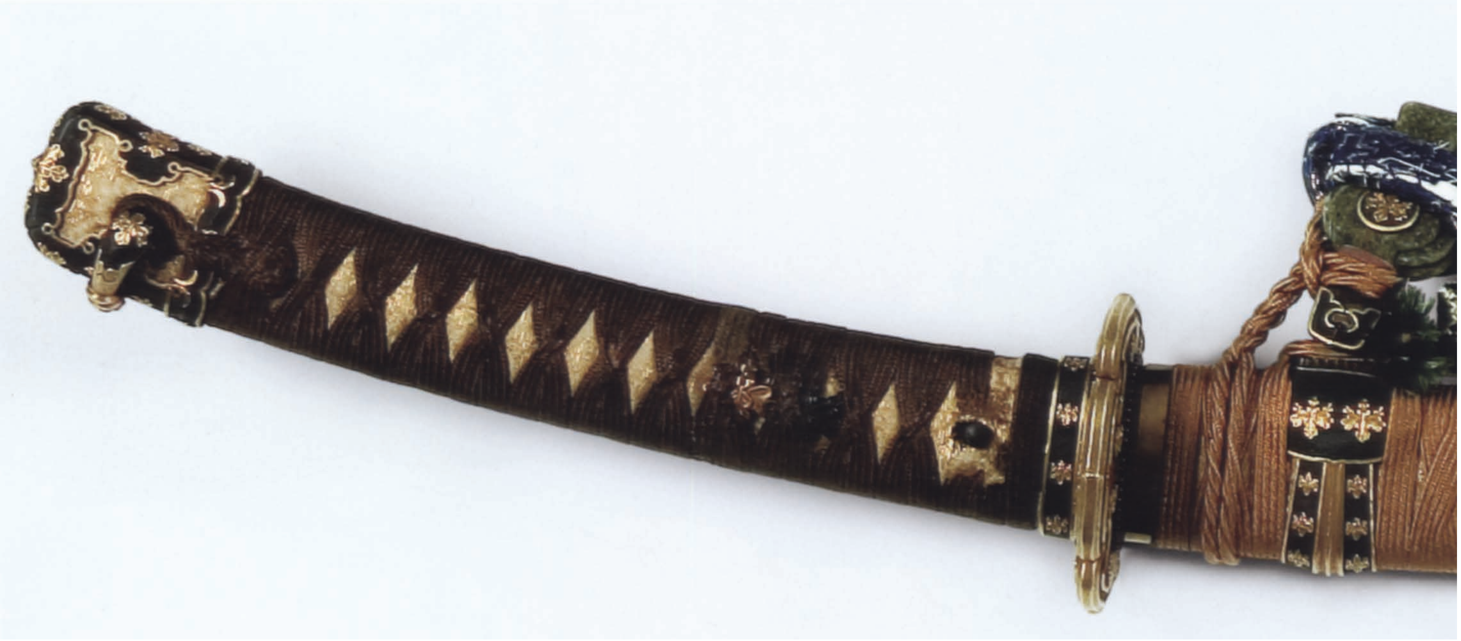
In 1649, Maeda Toshitsune of Kaga province (in present-day Ishikawa Prefecture) commissioned Hon'ami Koho—grandson of Hon'ami Kōetsu, a groundbreaking artist, calligrapher, and sword polisher from the Momoyama period and a towering figure in Japanese art—to make this *koshigatana* mounting using a magnificent matching set of seven gold fittings. The set of seven, which is referred to as a *nanatokoromono*—comprising a *kozuka*, *kōgai*, *menuki*, *fuchi-gashira*, *kurigata*, *kaeri-zuno*, and *kojiri*—was made by Gotō Yūjō (see also cat. no. 146), a metalworker retained by the eighth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimasa (r. 1449–73). Yūjō was the ancestor-founder of the Gotō family, which flourished for seventeen generations, into the Edo period. Although Yūjō is known for specializing in *mitokoromono* (a set of three fittings, comprising the *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *menuki*), there are examples of *nanatokoro-mono* by him as well, including this set. Here the *mitokoromono* have a *nanako* (punched dot) ground with peony motifs and *shishi* (lions from Chinese mythology) executed in high-relief *suemon-zōgan* (inset appliqué). The *kurigata* (cord knob) and *kaeri-zuno* (retaining hook) are carved in the round with *shishi* motifs.

HK









## 120.

## Cord-bound *ito maki no tachi* mounting with gold *nashiji* lacquer

国宝 金梨地糸巻太刀

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Momoyama period, late 16th century
Wood, lacquer, *shakudō*, gold, and silk
L. 109 cm (42⅞ in.)
Chido Museum, Yamagata Prefecture
**National Treasure**

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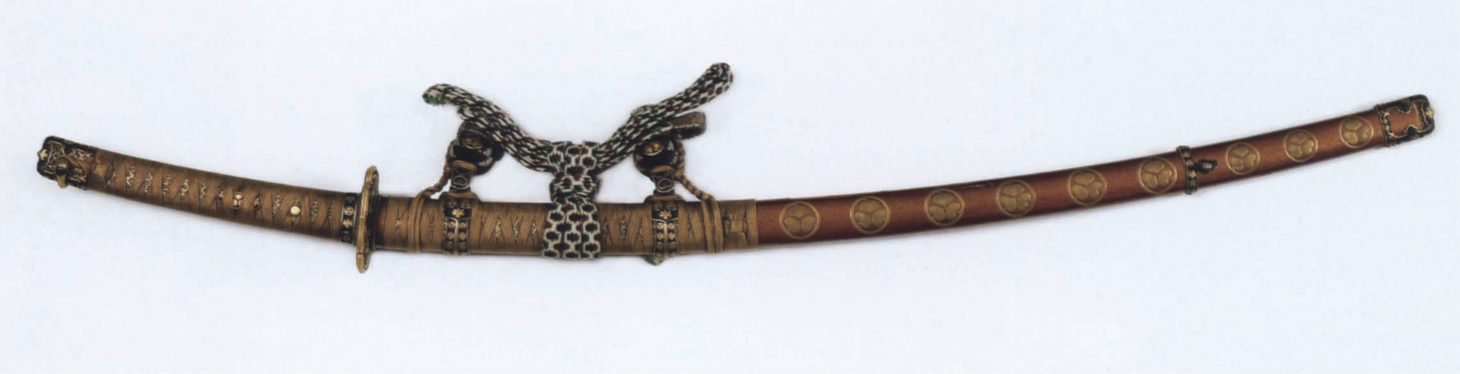
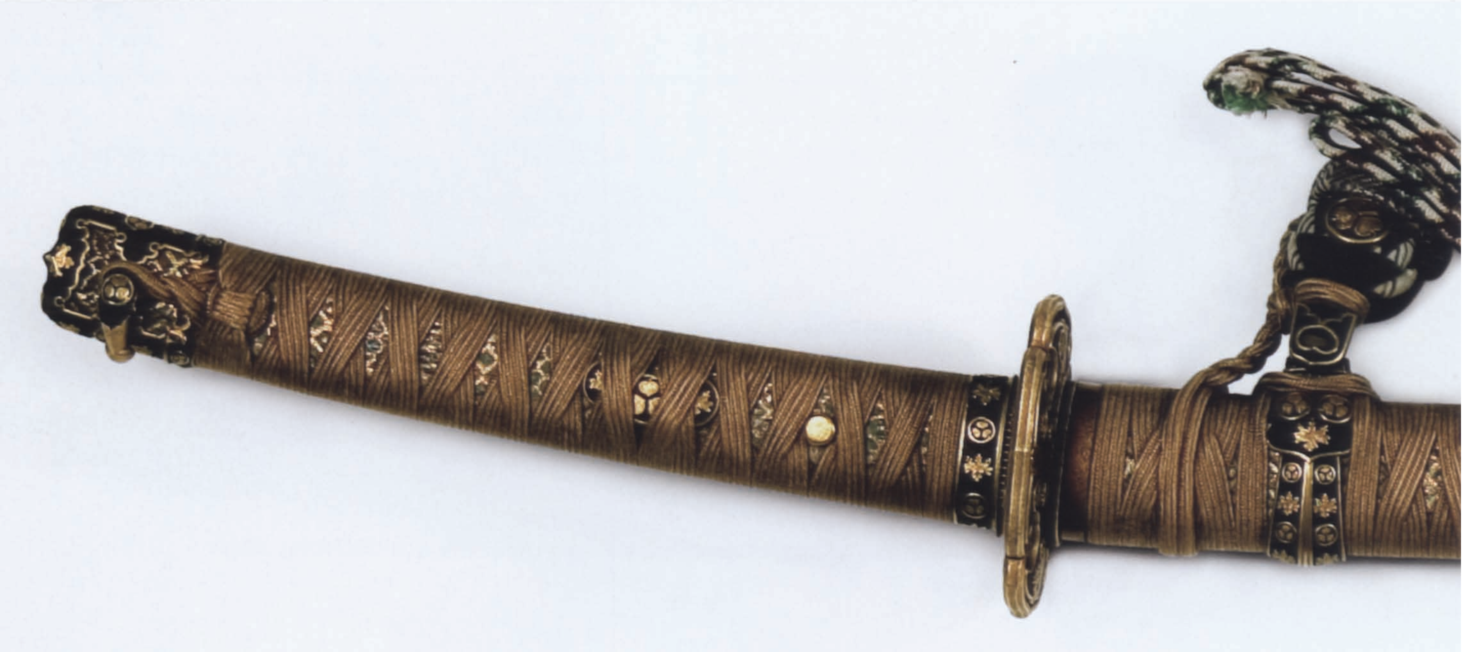
On his return from the Battle of Nagashino (1575), the renowned warrior Oda Nobunaga visited Sakai Tadatsugu, a retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu, at Yoshida Castle and presented him with a reward in gratitude for his part in the offensive against Takeda Katsuyori: a *tachi* (slung sword) by Osafune Sanemitsu (cat. no. 79). This mounting, called an *ito maki no tachi*, was presented by Nobunaga along with the sword. It reflects the beginnings of a trend that would evolve during the Edo period in which *ito maki no tachi* came to be used primarily as gifts or dedicatory offerings to shrines.

Although many elements of the style of this mounting carried over into the Edo period, later *ito maki no tachi* were usually decorated with family *mon* (insignia) on the scabbard; this Momoyama-period piece has none. The scabbard is covered in gold *nashiji*, in which fine metal flakes are sprinkled on a surface and then coated in transparent lacquer to create what is often described as a "pearlskin" surface texture. The metal fittings have a *shakudō nanako* ground and are embellished with gold paulownia *mon* in *takabori iro-e* (high-relief applied metal).

HK





## 121.

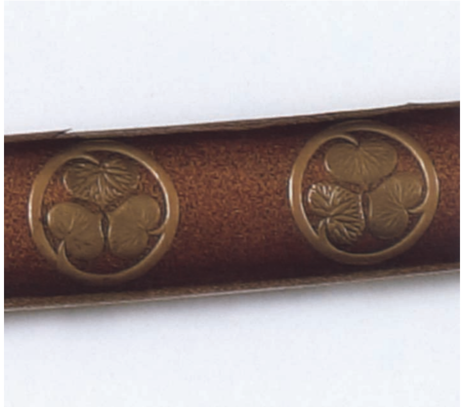
## Cord-bound *ito maki no tachi* mounting with gold *nashiji* lacquer and hollyhock *mon* (insignia) in gold *maki-e*

## 国宝　金梨地葵紋蒔絵糸巻太刀

Edo period, 17th century
Wood, lacquer, *maki-e*, *shakudō*, gold, and silk
L. 112.1 cm (44⅛ in.)
Chido Museum, Yamagata Prefecture
**National Treasure**

This mounting is for the *tachi* by Nobufusa (cat. no. 61), which is said to have been given to the warrior Sakai Tadatsugu by Tokugawa Ieyasu, although there is no clear record of the event. It is of the same type (an *ito maki no tachi*) as that made for the *tachi* by Sanemitsu (cat. no. 120), except that here the scabbard has hollyhock *mon* in gold lacquer. The addition of family *mon* to the scabbard and fittings represents a ceremonial style that had become formalized by the seventeenth century.

HK



**122.**

## *Daishō* pair of vermilion and gold *hirumaki* mountings

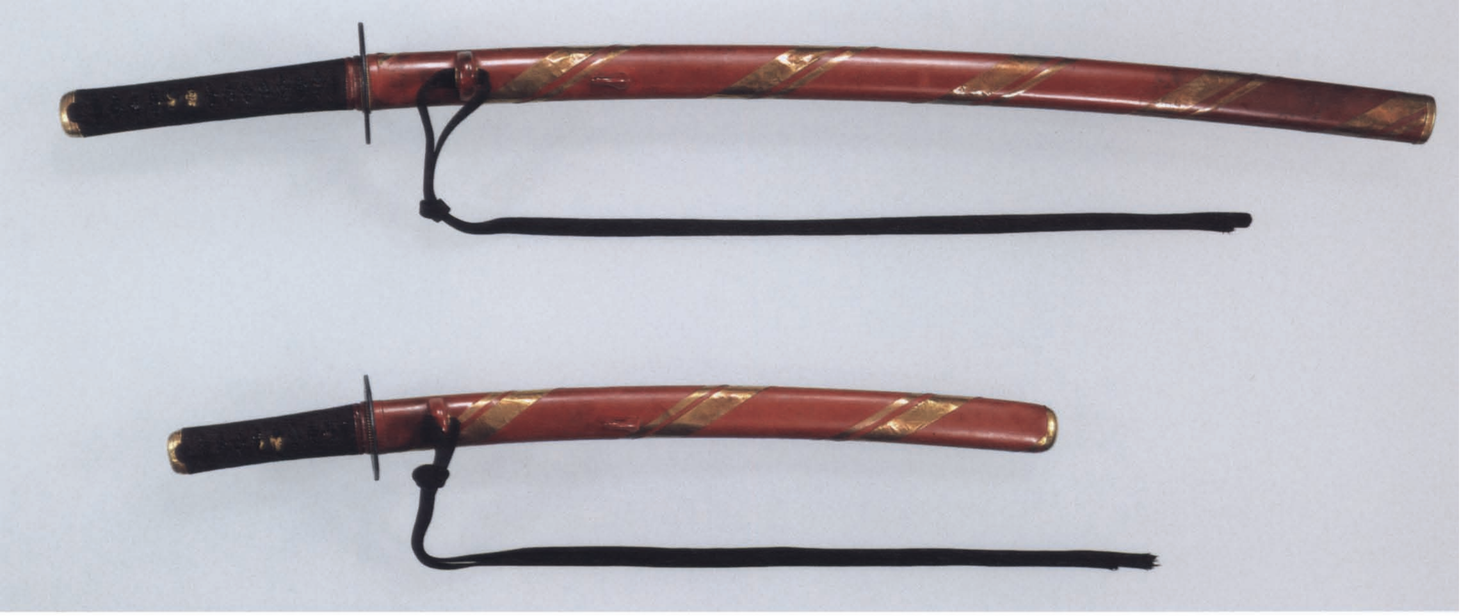
## 重要文化財 朱塗金蛭巻大小

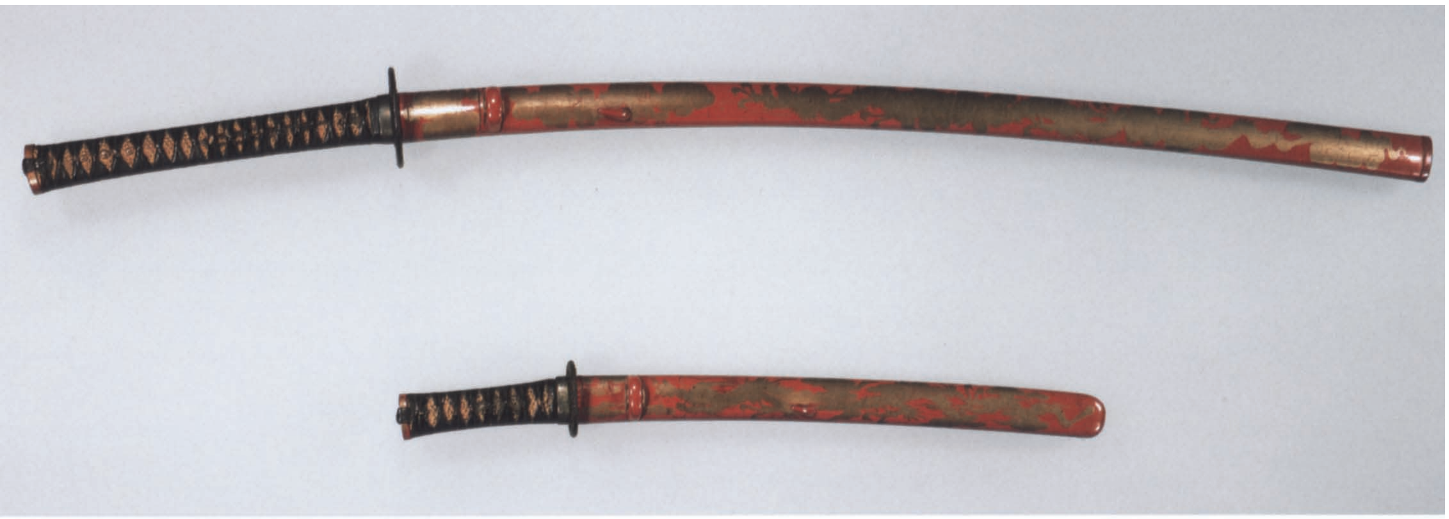
Momoyama period, 16th century
Wood, lacquer, rayskin, and gold
L. of *dai*, 95 cm (37⅜ in.); L. of *shō*, 70.2 cm (27⅝ in.)
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

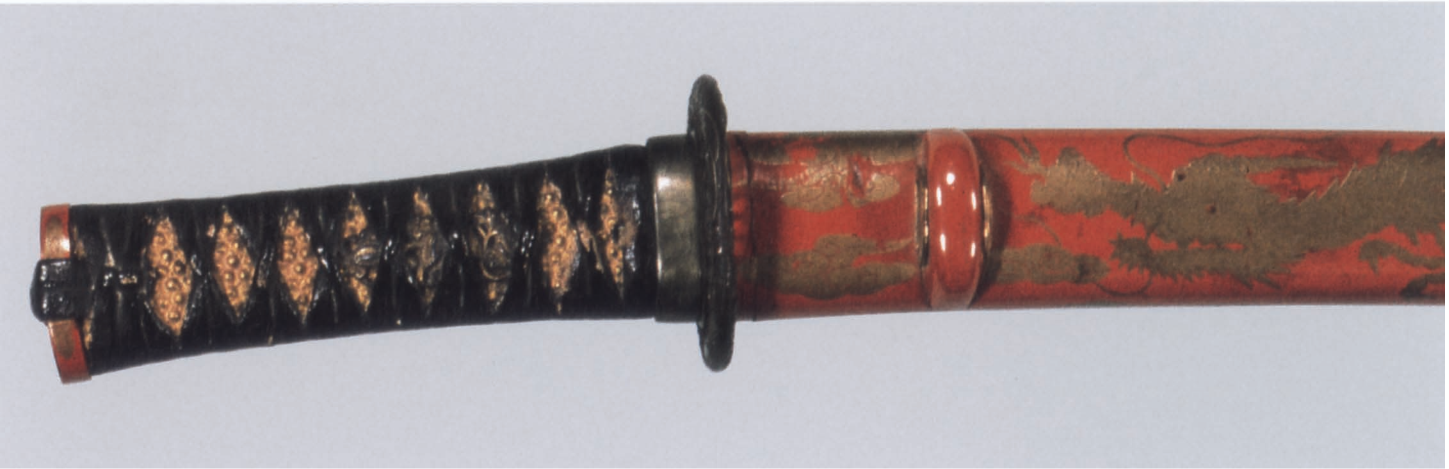
The fashion for carrying a *daishō*, a pair of swords consisting of a *katana* (the longer of the two) and a *wakizashi*, arose about the end of the Muromachi period. This early example of a *daishō* with matching mountings belonged to Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), who helped unify Japan in the wake of the Sengoku-jidai, or Age of Wars. After his death, the *tsuba* (sword guards) were given to the Asano house, and the blades, together with the mountings, were given to the Mizoguchi house.

Hideyoshi lived long enough to see the Momoyama period, a time when decades of civil strife finally came to an end and a rich artistic culture was allowed to develop. As part of this florescence, newly built provincial castles as well as temples in Kyōto were decorated with sumptuous wall and screen paintings using copious amounts of gold and silver. With its vermilion lacquer, spiraling bands of gold, and *kashira* (pommel cap) and *menuki* (hilt fittings) likewise made of gold, this *daishō* perfectly evinces the Momoyama spirit. Note how the relative positions of the thick and thin gold spirals on the scabbards are reversed. The original *tsuba*, also made of gold, are pierced with paulownia *mon*; they are said to be the work of Gotō Tokujō (1550–1631) and are still in the possession of the Asano family.

HK







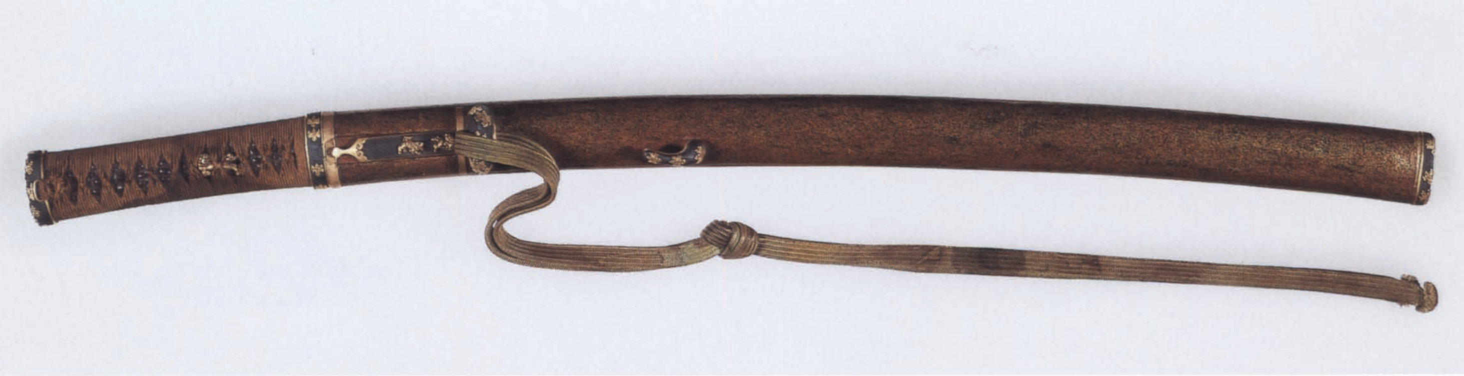
**123.**

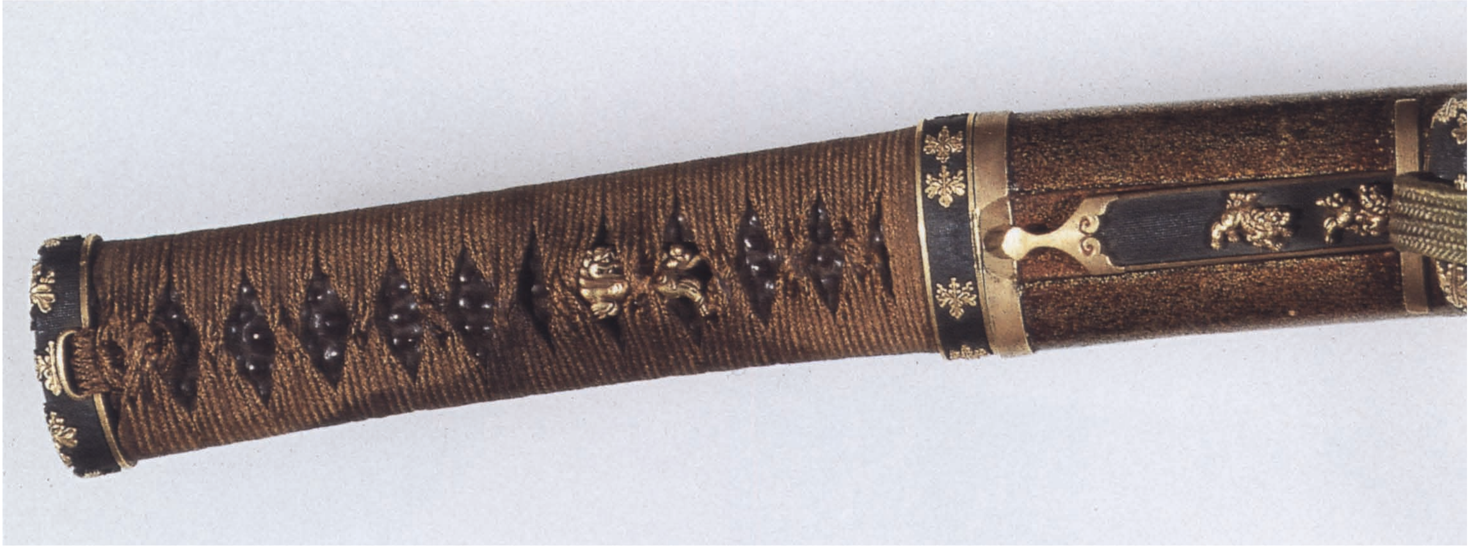
*Daishō* pair of vermilion-lacquered mountings with cloud and dragon motifs

重要文化財 朱塗雲龍文蒔絵大小

Momoyama period, 16th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, copper, and brass
L. of *dai*, 116 cm (45⅝ in.); L. of *shō*, 59 cm (23¼ in.)
Oyama-jinja Shrine, Ishikawa Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

These swords were worn by Maeda Toshiie, the first lord of Kaga domain (in present-day Ishikawa and Toyama Prefectures), in his youth, when he called himself "Inuchiyo." The pair is thus popularly known as the "Inuchiyo mounting." The records of Oyama-jinja, the shrine dedicated to Maeda Toshiie, indicate that he wore them at the Battle of Okehazama, in June 1560, where Oda Nobunaga defeated Imagawa Yoshimoto. The hilts are made of copper sheet beaten to resemble *same* (rayskin). They are clad in gold leaf and bound with black-lacquered braid. The scabbards are lacquered vermilion overall, including the *kurigata* (cord knob) and the *kaeri-zuno* (retaining hook), and are embellished with a bold design of dragons in gold *maki-e* that on both pieces extends from the mouth to the chape. The *tsuba* (sword guard) of the *katana* mounting (the longer of the two) has a design of a dragon inlaid in brass; that of the *wakizashi* is pierced with a wheel motif, autumnal leaves, and pampas grass in *usuniku-zōgan* (slightly raised inlay). The contrast between the vermilion and the gold is particularly striking. Indeed, this pair, along with the vermilion and gold *hirumaki no tachi* (cat. no. 122), can be considered representative of Momoyama-period *daishō*. The narrowing cross section of the scabbard in the direction of the cutting edge is characteristic of the Momoyama and early Edo periods. HK





**124.**

*Koshigatana* mounting with gold *nashiji* lacquer

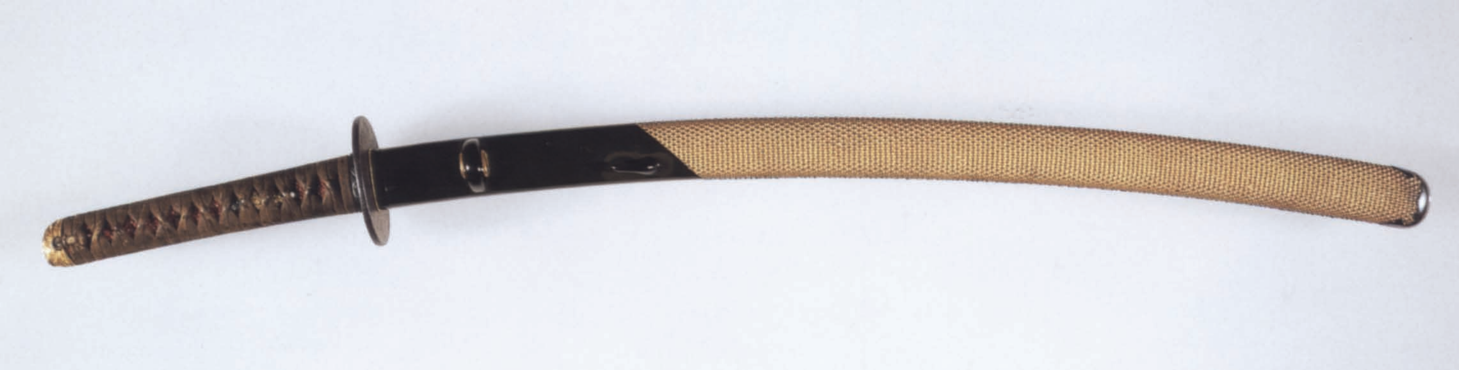
重要文化財 金梨地腰刀

Edo period, 17th century
Wood, lacquer, rayskin, *shakudō*, gold, and silk
L. 71.5 cm (28⅛ in.)
Nikkō Tōshōgū Shrine, Tochigi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

This *koshigatana*-type mounting was made for the *wakizashi* blade jointly made by Katsumitsu and Munemitsu of Osafune, in Bizen province (cat. no. 95). The hilt is covered with black-lacquered *same* (rayskin); the scabbard has a gold *nashiji* ground; and the fittings—including the *fuchigashira*, *menuki*, *kozuka*, *kōgai*, *kaeri-zuno*, and *kojiri*—are made of *shakudō nanako* with gold edging and paulownia motifs in gold *iro-e*.

The mounting once belonged to Tokugawa Ieyasu and was probably carried by him well into old age. Although made for a *wakizashi* blade, it is somewhat unusual in that it has no *tsuba* (sword guard). Among the swords owned by the warrior Uesugi Kagekatsu is an *uchigatana* that was never fitted with a sword guard, possibly indicating that this style was in vogue for a time from the Momoyama to the early Edo period.

HK



## 125.

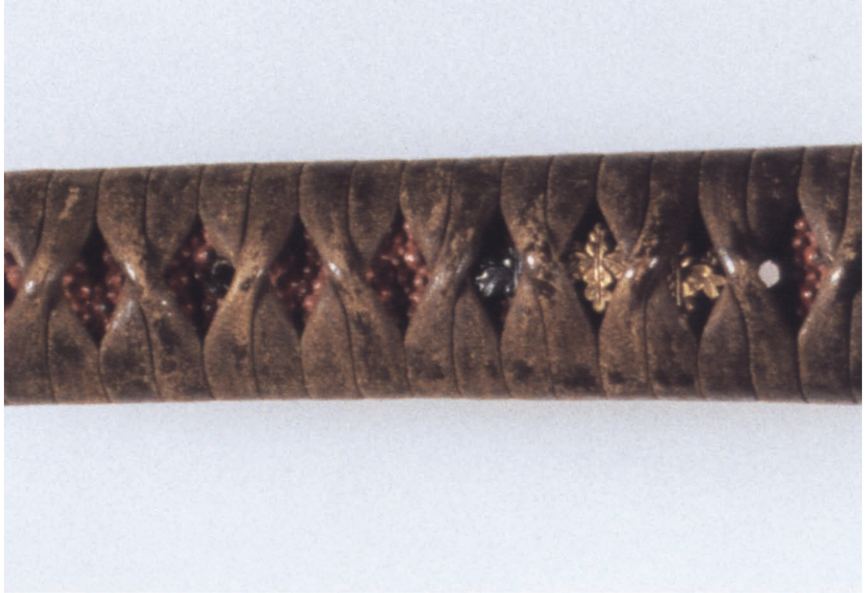
## *Katana* mounting with a gold "hailstone" rayskin motif

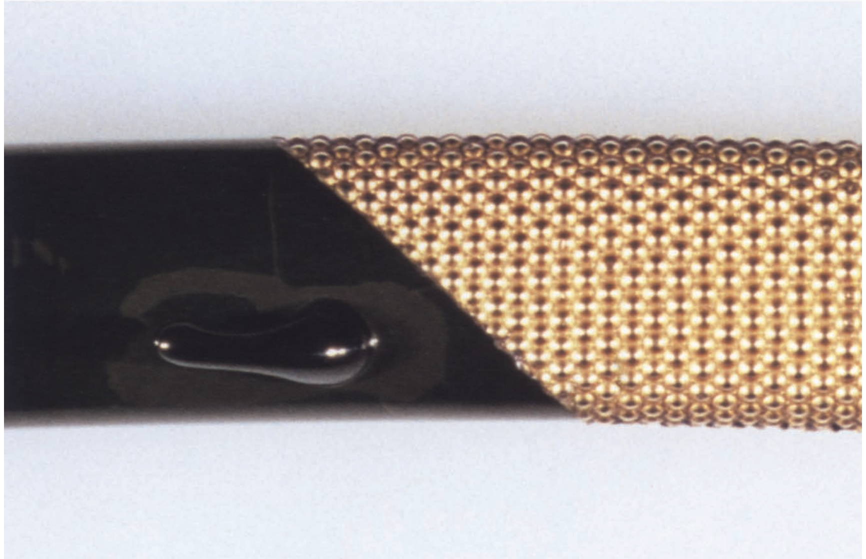
重要文化財 金霰鮫青漆打刀

Momoyama period, 17th century
Wood, leather, lacquer, and gold
L. 91.6 cm (36⅛ in.)
Fukuoka City Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

This mounting was made to house the *katana* blade by Osafune Sukesada with which Kuroda Yoshitaka, a retainer of the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, had killed Ataki Kōchi no kami Kiyoyasu at Awaji-shima, in the ninth year of the Tenshō era (1581), after Hideyoshi had invaded Shikoku, the smallest of Japan's four major islands. The hilt is wrapped in vermilion rayskin and has a brown smoked-leather binding. The scabbard is lacquered dark blue at the *koshi* (upper part), while the lower part is clad in gold sheet impressed in a so-called hailstone pattern. The combination of the sumptuous gold *kashira* (pommel cap), the vermilion hilt, and the dark blue and gold scabbard conveys the richness and brilliance typical of the Momoyama-period aesthetic. The mounting for the sword by Hasebe Kunishige (cat. no. 92), which was owned by Nagamasa, Kuroda Yoshitaka's son, was modeled on this piece.

HK





**126.**

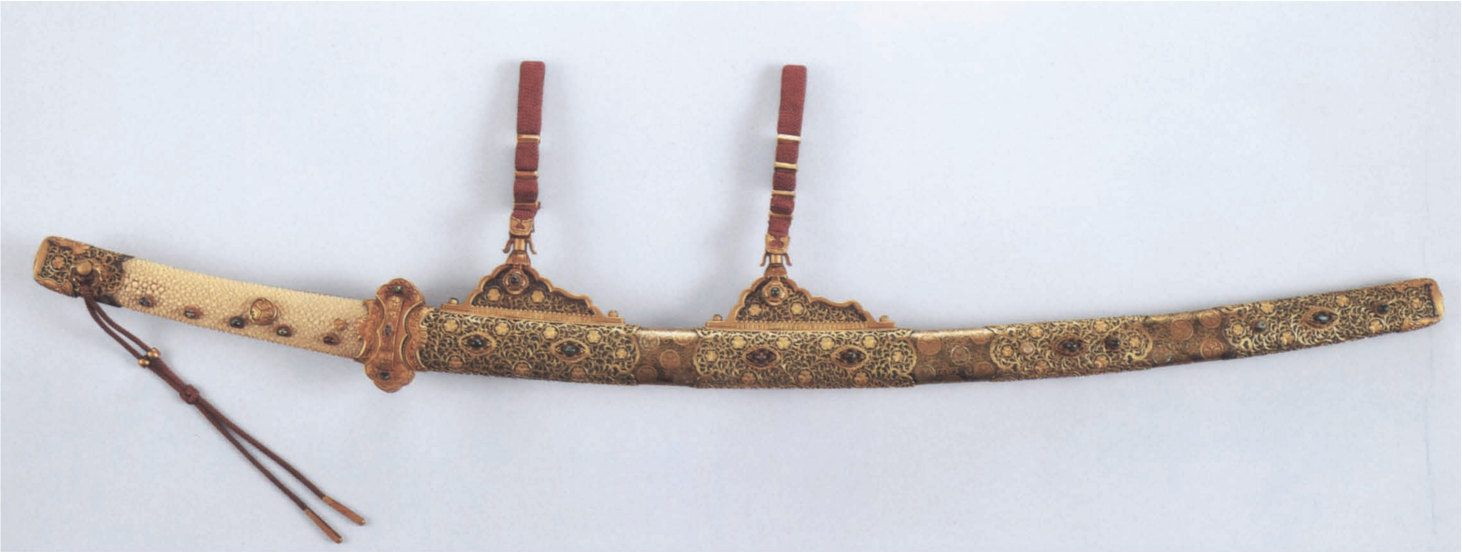
### *Kazaritachi* mounting with *nashiji* lacquer

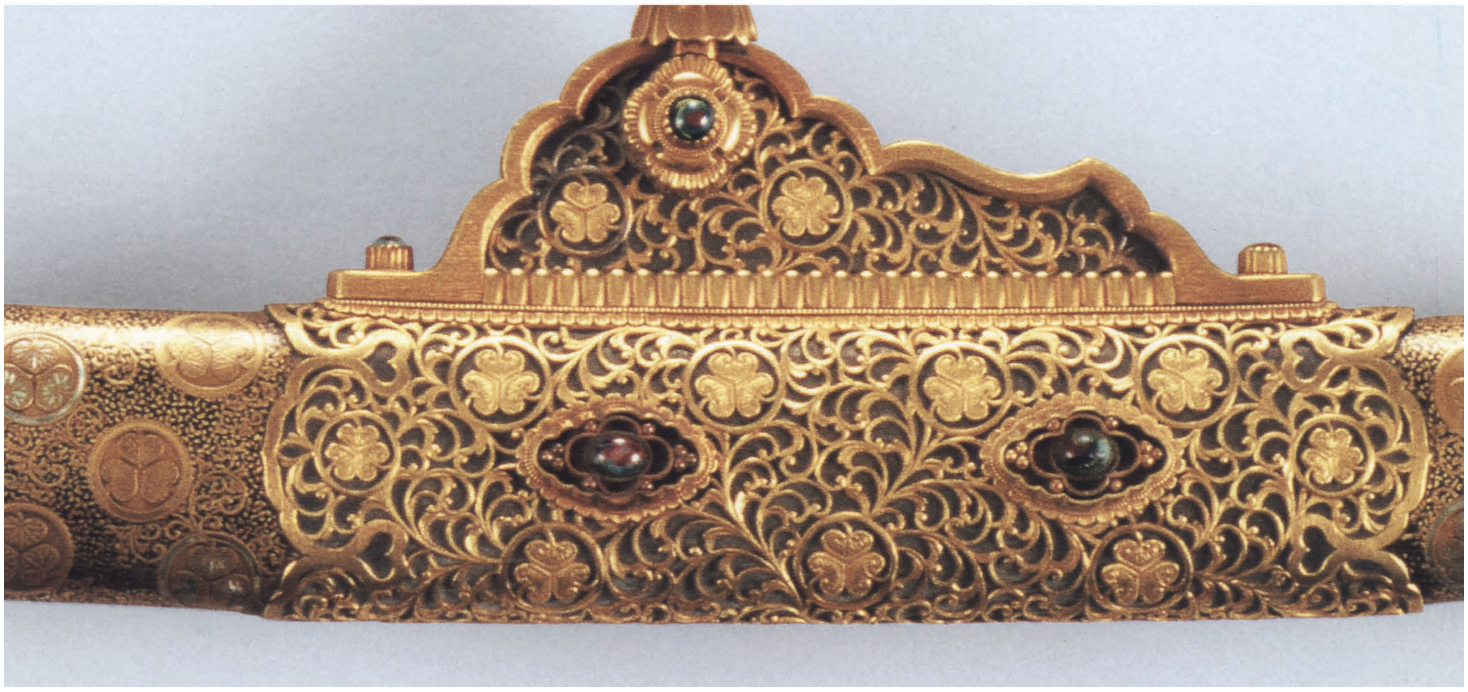
### 葵紋唐草金装飾太刀

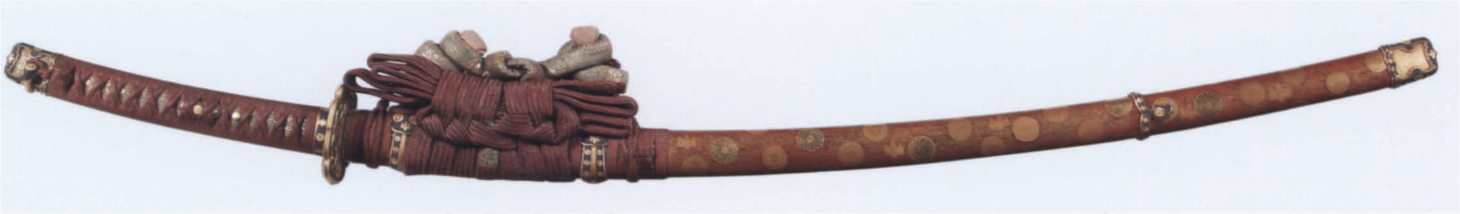
Edo period, 17th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, rayskin, shell, cloisonné, and gemstones
L. 89.7 cm (35⅜ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

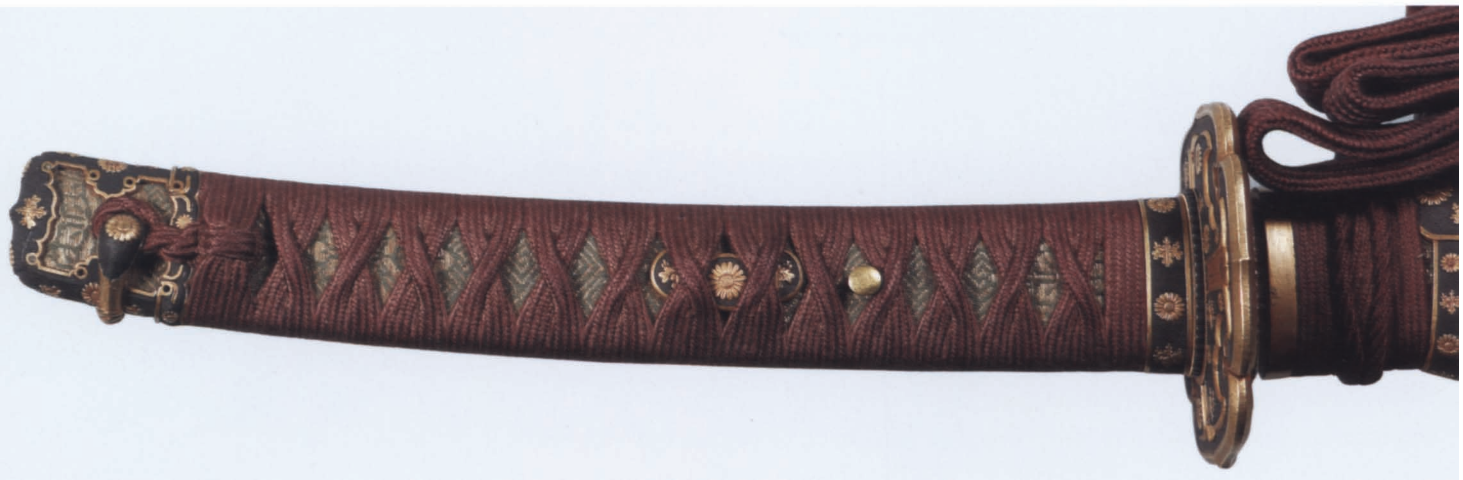
The scabbard of this luxurious *kazaritachi* mounting is lacquered in the *hiramaki-e*, or flat lacquer, technique. It is further embellished with scattered *aoi mon* (hollyhock insignia) in *maki-e* lacquer, thin gold sheet, and shell inlay. The gold fittings—including the *ichi-no-ashi* and *ni-no-ashi* (the front and rear suspension fittings), the *seme-gane* (a band fixed near the end of the scabbard), and the *ishizuki* (chape)—are decorated with pierced *aoi mon* and *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork), blue cloisonné inlay, and inset gemstones.

During the Heian period, the *kazaritachi* was the supreme form of ceremonial sword worn by *bunkan*—high-ranking civil officials of the nobility—who were allowed to wear swords as part of their regulation ceremonial dress when attending the imperial court. Such mountings were worn suspended from the *hirao*, a wide textile waistband. This type of mounting originated as a simplified form of the *karatachi*, a style of mounting imported from China in the Nara period (8th century). Because it was intended solely for ceremonial use, the scabbard originally contained a simple, straight iron bar that was untempered and of no practical use as a weapon. In the Edo









period, however, real blades were carried by *bukan* (military officials) in curved mountings like this one.

The present example was made for a *kodachi* (small *tachi*) by the swordsmith Yoshimochi of the Fukuoka Ichimonji school. This mounting was given by the Asano family of Hiroshima in the fourth year of the Genna era (1618) to Yoshinao, the first-generation Tokugawa lord of Owari province (in present-day Aichi Prefecture), on the occasion of his marriage to their second daughter, Haruhime. Although Yoshinao was a samurai, he was invested by the imperial court with the high rank of *Gonchunagon*, and he wore this *kazaritachi* in his capacity as a nobleman during ceremonies at court. In addition to the mounting's superb manufacture, befitting a wedding gift between two great daimyo families, it is valuable as a dated example of a *kazaritachi* from the early Edo period.

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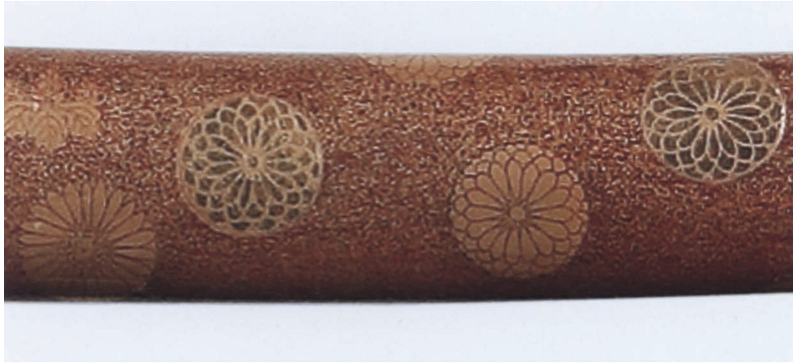


## 127.

## *Tachi* mounting with chrysanthemum and paulownia *mon* (insignia) and *nashiji* lacquer

### 金梨地菊桐紋散糸巻太刀

Edo period, 17th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, *shakudō*, and silk
L. 109 cm (42⅞ in.)
Tsukamoto Museum of Art, Chiba Prefecture

This type of mounting, known as an *ito maki no tachi* (see also cat. nos. 120, 121), is bound with cord not only over the hilt (*tsuka*) but along the scabbard as well, from the mouth (*saya-guchi*) as far down as the two *ashi-kanamono*, the metal fittings to which the straps used to hang the mounting from a sash around the wearer's waist were attached. It was originally intended for use in warfare by the miltary class. Examples from the Nanbokuchō period have stout, practical scabbards that are either lacquered or wrapped with leather; these are sometimes known as *sayamaki no tachi* (scabbard-wrapped slung swords). More elaborate mountings with extensive decoration—used by daimyo in ceremonies and for presentations to Shinto shrines—became popular beginning in the Momoyama period. They were also exchanged as gifts among the emperor, shogun, and other daimyo.

The scabbard of this splendid example has paulownia *mon* (family insignia) in *hiramaki-e* (flat lacquer) over a *nashiji* ("pearskin") ground. It is also decorated with chrysanthemum *mon*, in four different array patterns of petals, worked in *hiramaki-e* and gold foil. Overall there are 45 chrysanthemum and 9 paulownia *mon* scattered irregularly over the piece, some overlapping others and some that are of different sizes mingled together. They appear not only on the *omote* (obverse) and *ura* (reverse) sides of the scabbard but also on the back (*mune*) and edge (*ha*). The hilt is wrapped in gold brocade and bound with silk cord. All of the fittings—including the *tsuba* (sword guard), *ashi kanamono*, and *ishizuki* (chape)—are executed in *shakudō nanako* and have narrow gold rims. They are embellished with a total of 77 chrysanthemum and 69 paulownia *mon* in high-relief gold inlay, for a combined total of some 200 *mon* on the scabbard and fittings. Considering that there are few extant *tachi* mountings with more than 150 *mon*, this mounting was no doubt crafted with exceptional care. It was made to hold a long, fourteenth-century *ubu* (original length) *tachi* blade by Kagemitsu of Kaga province (in present-day Ishikawa Prefecture) and is a fine example of the combined work of seventeenth-century craftsmen.

The sword has long been in the possession of the Sakai family, who were lords of the Obama domain in Wakasa province (in present-day Fukui Prefecture) and who were also renowned for their great collection of antiquities. From the excellence of the manufacture and the density of chrysanthemum and paulownia *mon*, we can assume that this mounting was an imperial gift to them.

MM

## **128.**

## Pair of pheasant's-head *ito maki no tachi* mountings

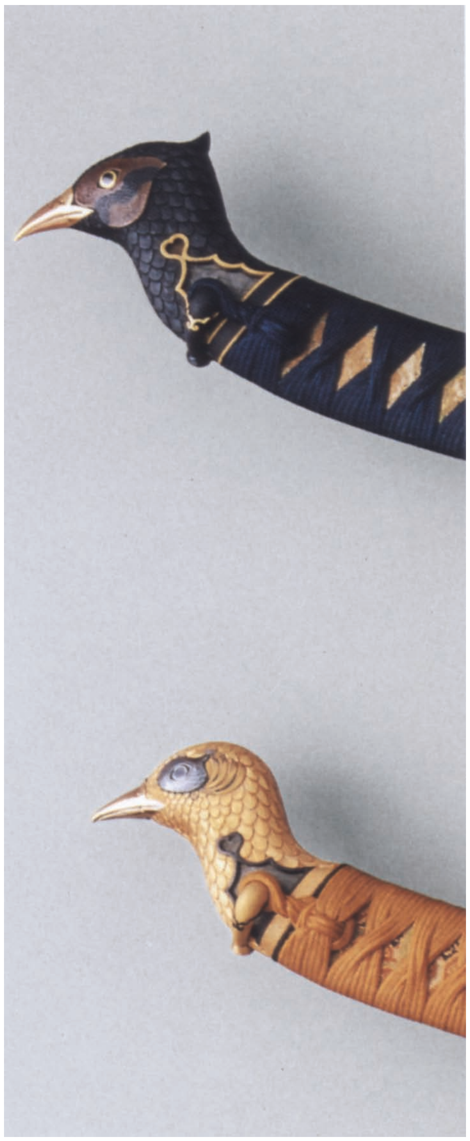
鳥頸太刀 2腰

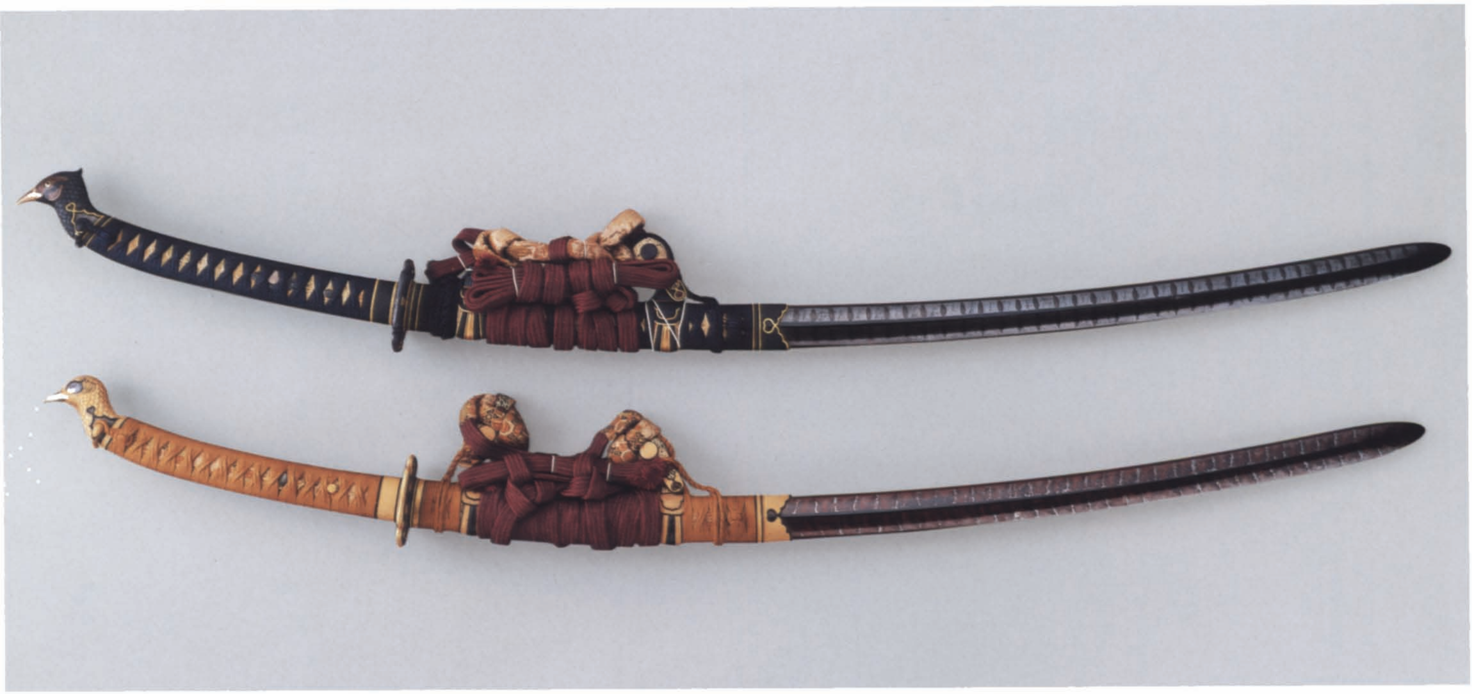
Edo period, 17th century
Wood, lacquer, *shakudō*, gold, and silver
L. of male, 130 cm (51⅛ in.); L. of female, 126 cm (49⅝ in.)
Morioka Central Public Hall, Iwate Prefecture

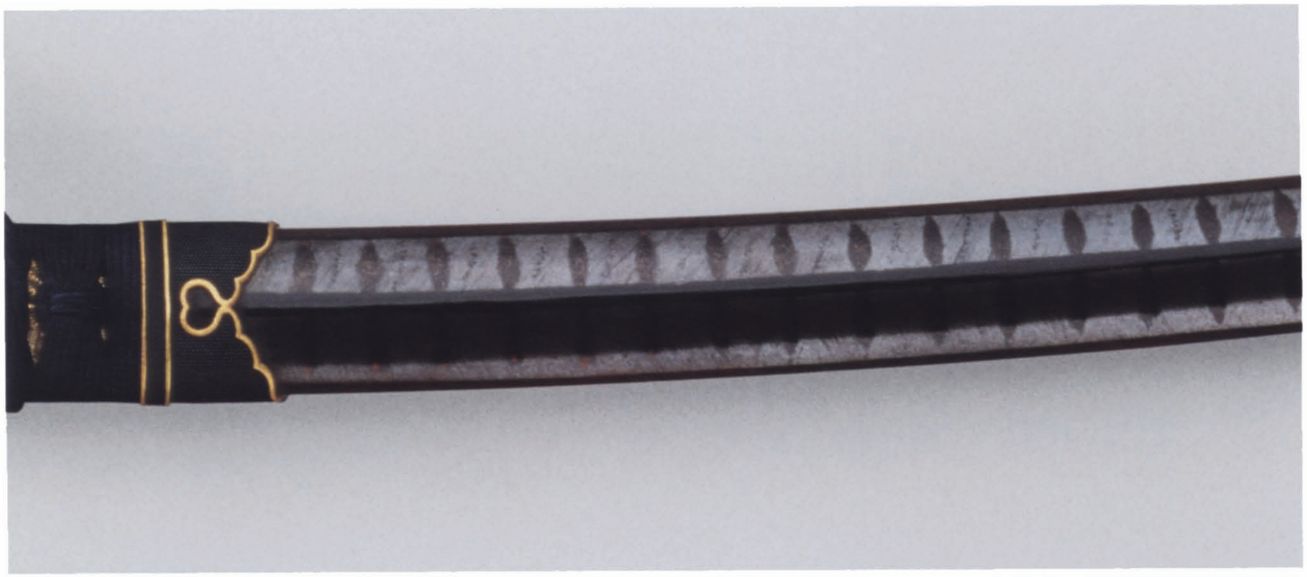
The manufacture of *tsuka-gashira* (the pommel at the end of the hilt) with bird motifs originated with the dragon- or phoenix-head *kantō tachi* of the Kofun period (see cat. no. 52). Heian-period falconry officials wore bird's-head *tachi*, and in the *Zenkunen Gassen ekotoba* (Handscroll of the Early Nine-Years' War) (ca. 13th century), the warrior Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (988–1075) is shown wearing such a sword. Surviving examples include a Kamakura-period mounting in the Nibutsuhime-jinja, a shrine in Wakayama Prefecture, and a pair of gold-mounted bird's-head *tachi* that in 1390 were dedicated by the Ashikaga shogun Yoshimitsu (r. 1367–95) to the Kumano Hayatama Taisha, another shrine in Wakayama Prefecture.

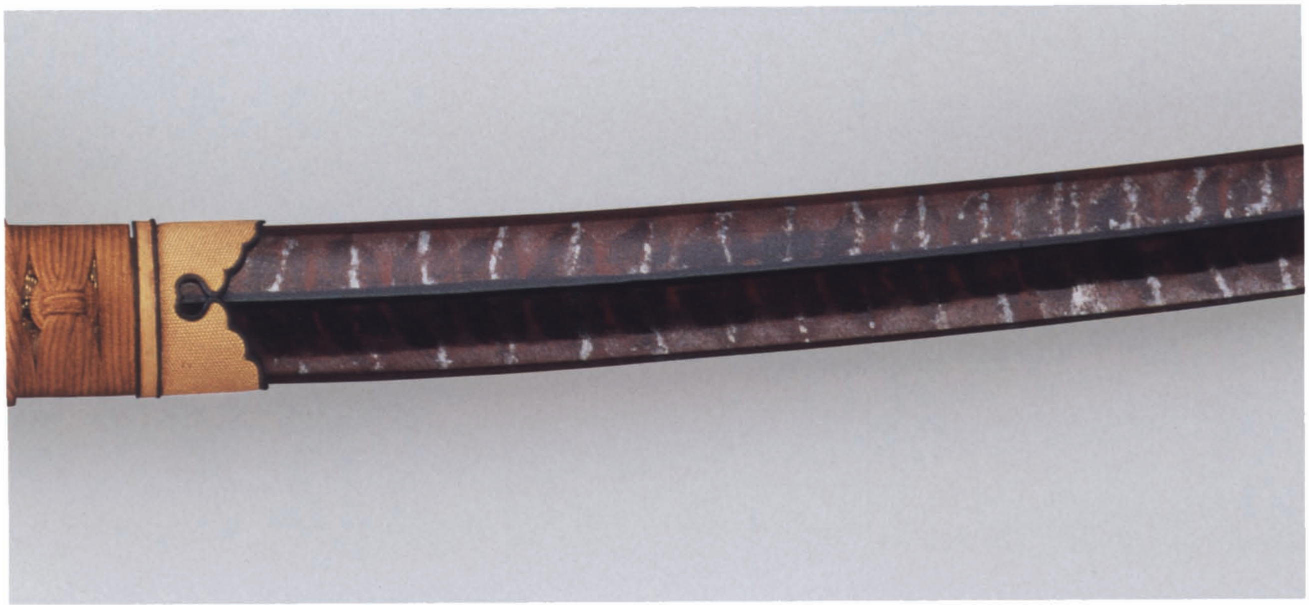
Each of these *ito maki no tachi* mountings (for a definition, see cat. no. 127) has a *kabuto-gane* (pommel cap) in the form of a pheasant's head and a scabbard embellished with feather designs. The "male" of the pair is made of dark *shakudō* and thus is somewhat somber compared to the vivid female, which is made of gold and has a bright hilt binding. Both are copies made during the Enpo era (1673–81) after the originals—which were gifts from Ashikaga Yoshinori (r. 1428–41) to the Nanbu family—were damaged by fire.

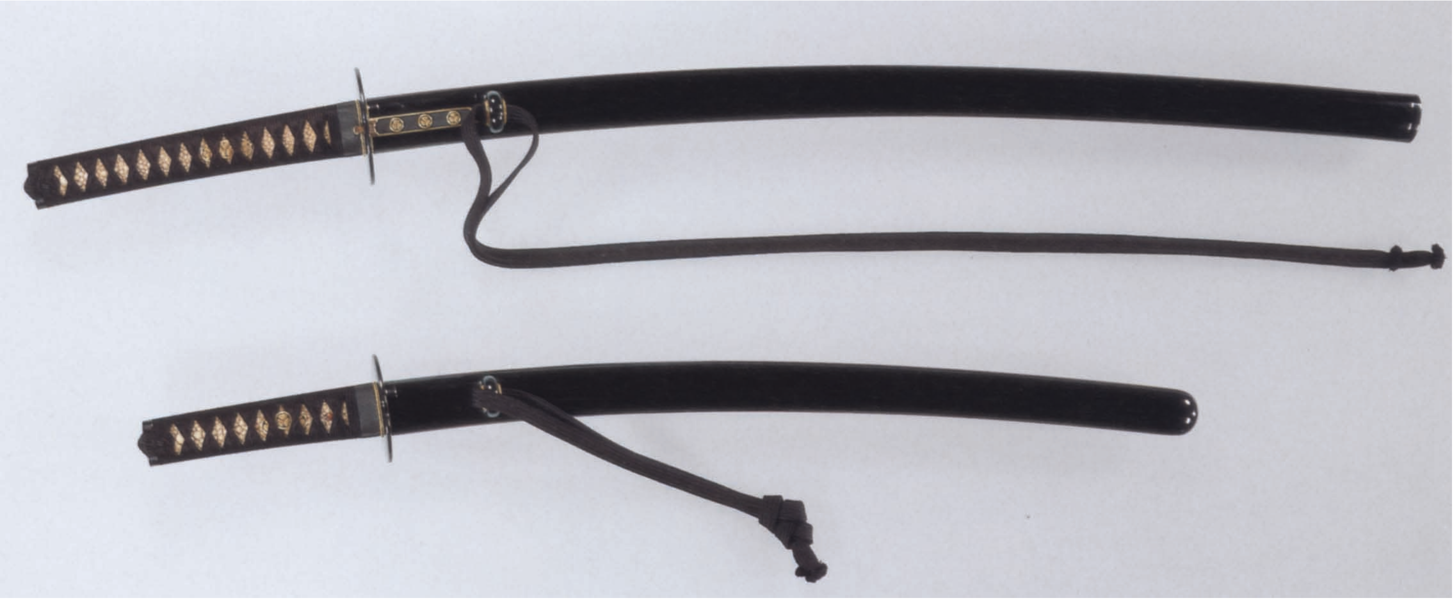
HK











**129.**

## *Daishō* pair of black-lacquered mountings

黒塗大小

Edo period, 18th century
Wood, lacquer, rayskin, silk, horn,
and *shakudō*
L. of *dai*, 97.1 cm (38¼ in.); L. of *shō*, 73.7 cm
(29 in.)
Tokyo National Museum

Numerous regulations governed the design of a formal *daishō* (pair of matching sword mountings) worn when visiting castles, attending court, and on other official occasions. For example, the entire scabbard had to be lacquered black, with no decoration, and the hilt had to be wrapped in white rayskin and cross-bound with black braid that passed over the *kashira* (pommel cap), which was usually made of black-lacquered horn. In addition, the *tsuba* (sword guard) had to be made of polished *shakudō*, either undecorated or with family *mon* (insignia) in high-relief gold inlay, and the *mitokoromono* (the matching set of fittings that includes the *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *menuki*) had to be either Yoshioka or Gotō school work with a *shakudō nanako* (punched dot) ground with family *mon*. The two *tsuba* on this *daishō* were later additions, but otherwise this pair is a typical example of a formal *daishō*. HK

Gotō Mitsuyoshi

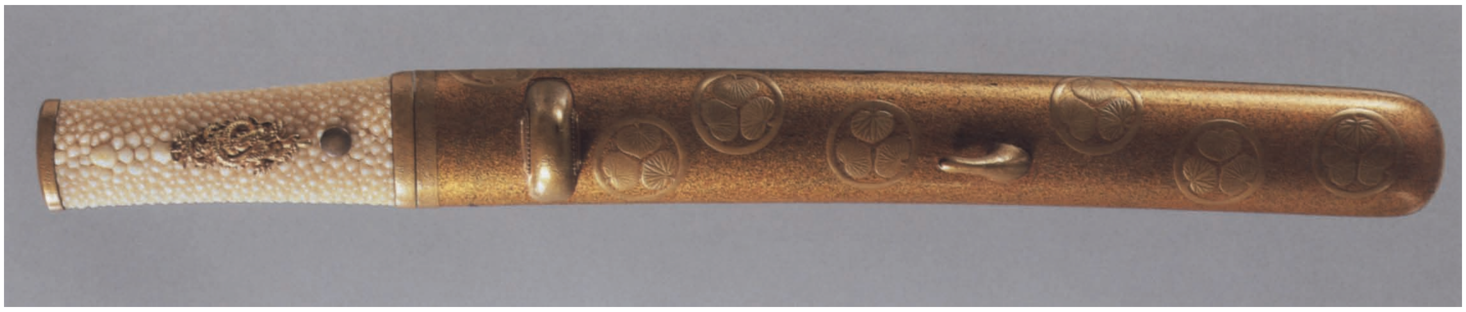
**130.**

## Gold *aikuchi* mounting for a *tantō* (dagger) with *nashiji* lacquer and hollyhock *mon* (insignia)

金梨地葵紋蒔絵合口

Edo period, 19th century
Wood, lacquer, rayskin, gold, and silk
L. 38.9 cm (15⅜ in.)
Sano Art Museum, Shizuoka Prefecture

This *aikuchi*-type mounting—which has no *tsuba* (sword guard)—accompanies the signed *tantō* by Kunimitsu (cat. no. 83). The maker, Gotō Mitsuyoshi (1783– 1834), was a fifteenth-generation metalworker. The *menuki* (hilt fittings) depict *kurikara* (*ken*-type swords encircled by a dragon) and are made of gold worked in *kata-bori* (repoussé). The *kozuka* (utility knife handle) is made of *shakudō* with a *nanako* (punched dot) ground, with gold *kurikara* fixed by the *suemon* method (inset appli-



qué). Those components made of animal horn—including the *kashira*, *fuchi*, *koiguchi*, *kurigata*, *kaeri-zuno*, and *uragawara*—have *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork) depicted in pointillé engraving on a *ikakeji* ground (gold powder mixed into clear lacquer). The hilt is covered in white *same* (rayskin), and the scabbard is lacquered in gold *nashiji*. There are six *aoi mon* (hollyhock insignia) in gold *maki-e* lacquer on the *omote* (obverse) and four on the *ura* (reverse). Although the mounting is a late Edo-period work, with its gold *nashiji*, gold *maki-e*, and gold *ikakeji* ground it is an extremely high-quality piece befitting the Tokugawa house. It was previously in the collection of the Hosokawa family, lords of Kumamoto domain. WT

Gotō Ichijō

## 131.

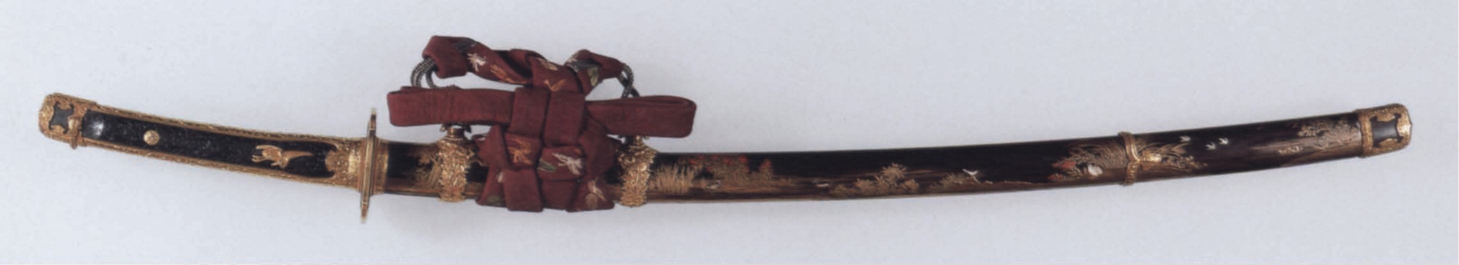
## *Tachi* mounting with bird and flower designs

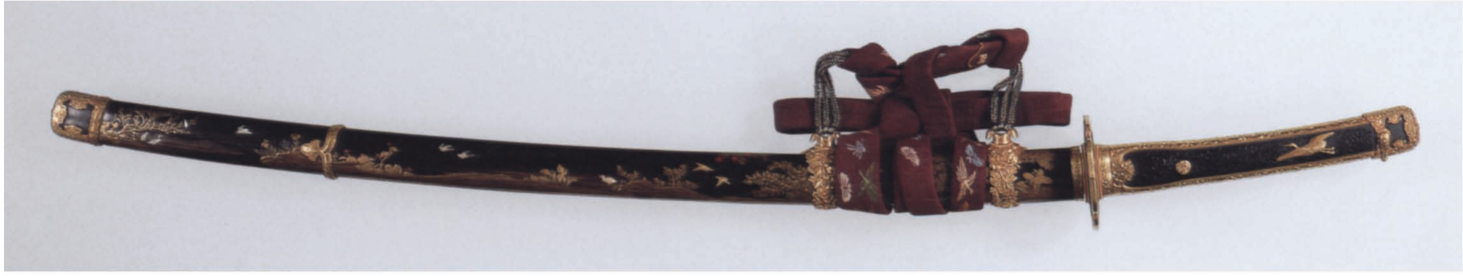
## 紫檀地花鳥蒔絵螺鈿太刀

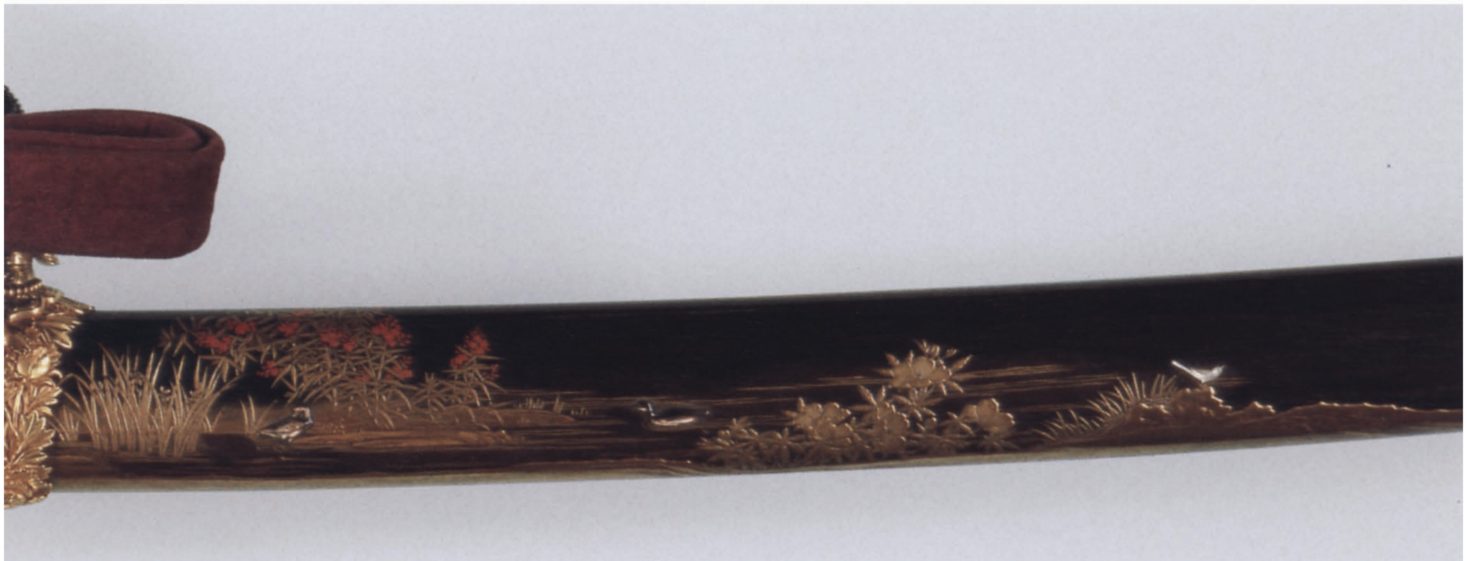
Edo period, 19th century
Red sandalwood, lacquer, shell, gold, silver, and *shakudō*
L. 103 cm (40½ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

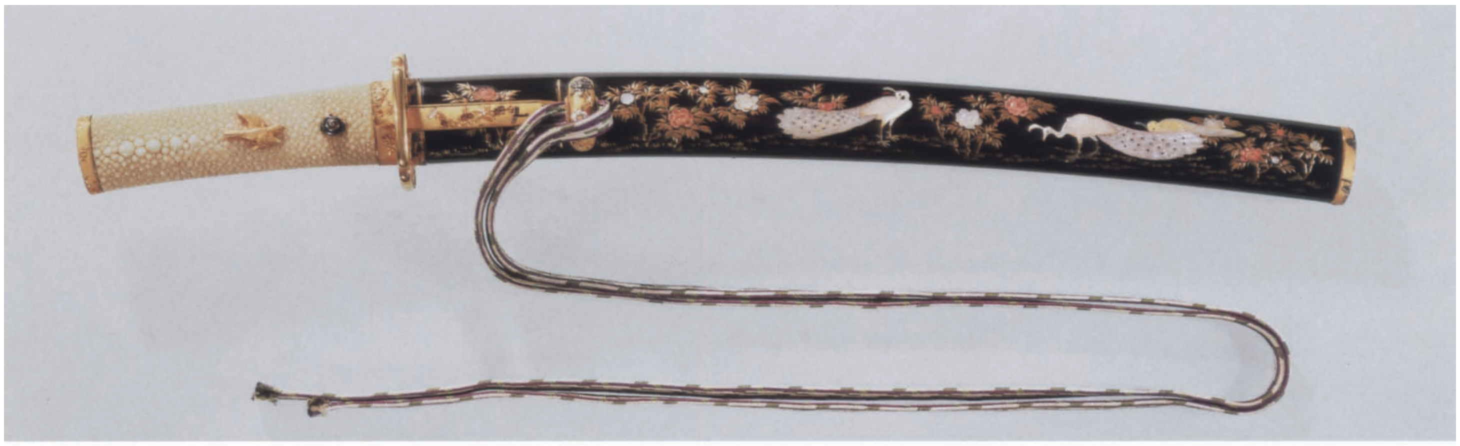
This mounting was commissioned from Gotō Ichijō (1791–1876) by the Emperor Kōmei (r. 1846–67) to house a *tachi* blade made by the swordsmith Bizen Osafune Hidemitsu that had been given to him in 1863 by Iemochi, the fourteenth Tokugawa shogun (r. 1858–66). The hilt is made of *shakudō* with *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork) in *kebori* (line) engraving; the scabbard is made of red sandalwood decorated with a bird and flower motif in high-relief gold *maki-e* lacquer and shell inlay; and the fittings are made of gold with the same bird and flower motif carved in low relief. The mounting is hung from silver *hyōgo gusari* chains, but the decoration on the scabbard and metal fittings is completely different from that found on the *hyōgo (hyōgu) gusari tachi* popular during the Kamakura period (see cat. no. 110). The exquisite finish is so luxurious, even excessive, one could say that the mounting appears to have been made as something to be admired rather than used.

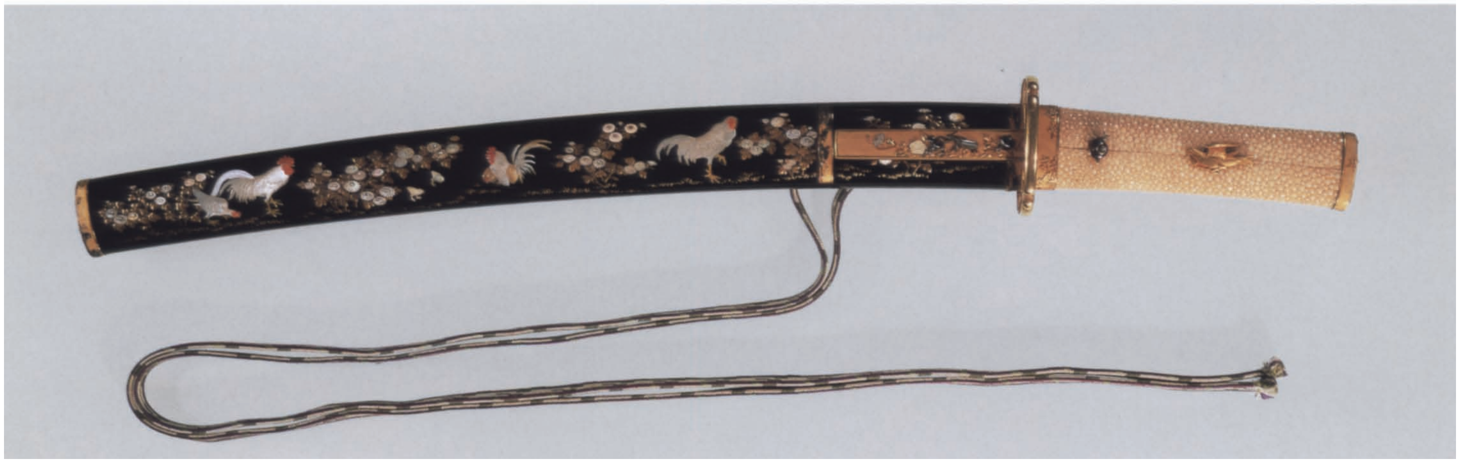
HK











**132.**

### *Wakizashi* mounting with bird and flower designs

黒檀地花鳥蒔絵螺鈿脇差

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Edo period, 19th century  
Ebony, rayskin, lacquer, shell, gold, silver, and *shakudō*  
L. 62.7 cm (24¾ in.)  
Tokyo National Museum

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The Emperor Kōmei (r. 1846–67), the last ruler of the Edo period, owned this *wakizashi* mounting. A considerable number of *tachi* and *wakizashi* survive from his collection, many of them decorated with similar designs in high-relief *maki-e* lacquer and shell inlay: a sumptuous treatment reflecting the height of fashion at that time. The ebony scabbard of this luxurious example is decorated with peacocks and peonies in *maki-e* lacquer and shell inlay, and the hilt is wrapped in white rayskin. The *tsuba* (sword guard), *fuchigashira* (collar and pommel cap), and *mitokoromono*—a matching set of fittings comprising the *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *menuki*—are the work of Gotō Ichijō (1791–1876), the greatest fittings maker of the late Edo period. They are made of gold and depict a bird and flower motif finely carved in high relief. The shell inlay was applied by Nakano Isseki. HK

**133.**

### *Toppei*-style *uchigatana* mounting with polished *same* (sharkskin) and longitudinal ribbing

縦刻研出鮫打刀（突兵拵）

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Edo period, 19th century  
Sharkskin, *shibuichi*, gold, silver, silk, and wood  
L. 95.5 cm (37⅝ in.)  
Private collection

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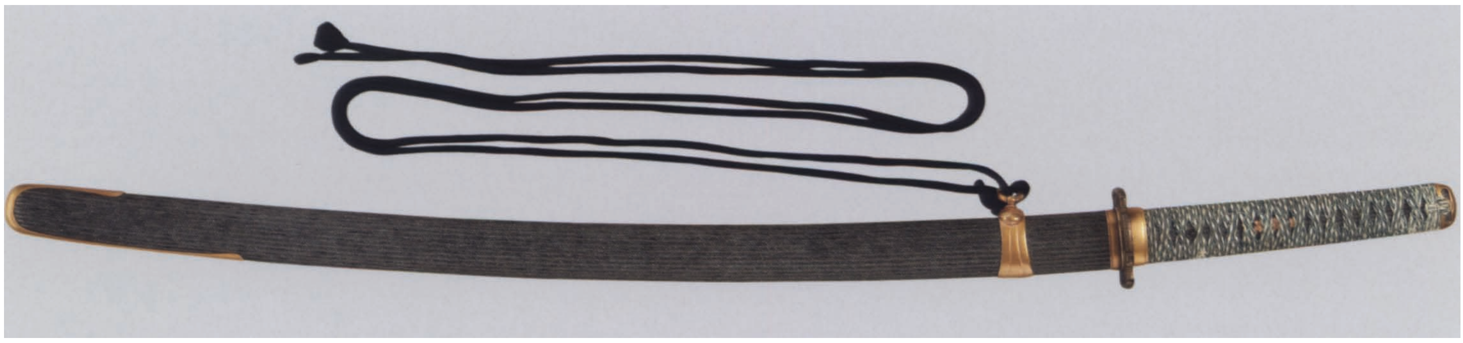
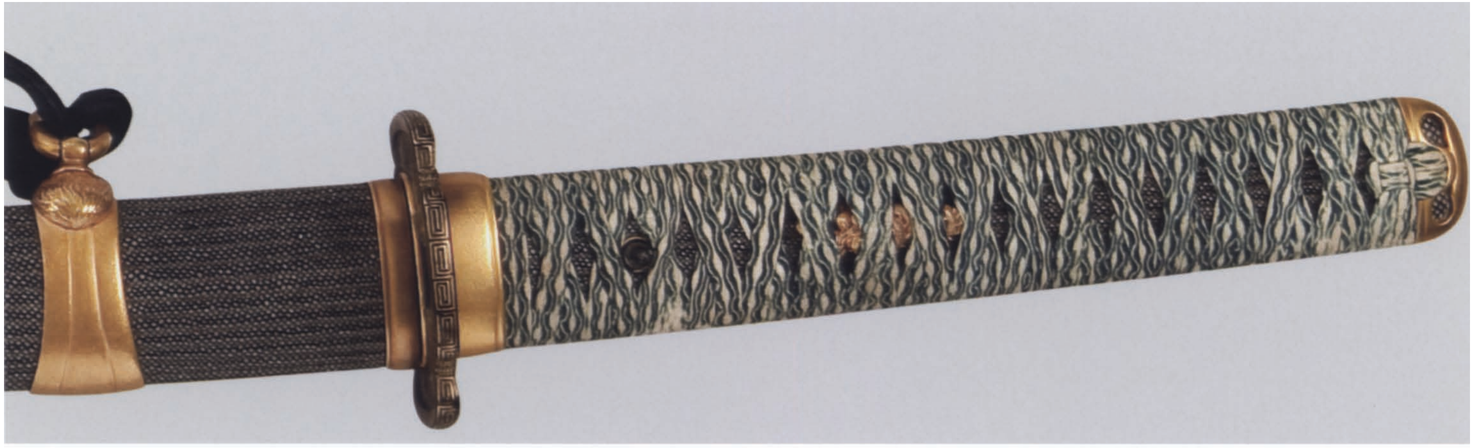
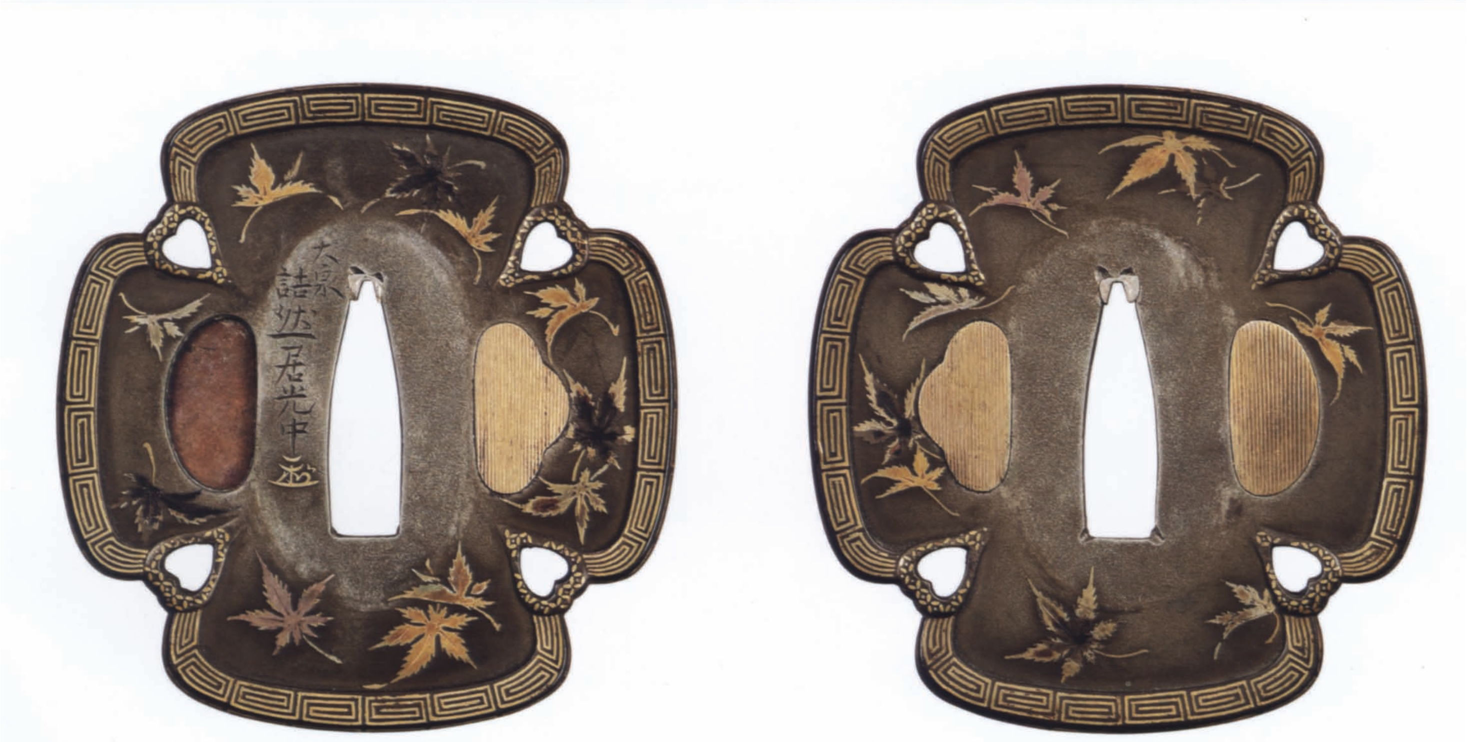
In the late Edo period, about the middle of the nineteenth century, the increasing presence of Europeans in Japan proved strongly influential in terms of the Japanese taste for Western methods of warfare and styles of military equipment. The name for this type of mounting, which was made under that influence, is "toppei." Most notable is the method of suspension, in which the sword was worn hanging vertically, like a Western military saber. The mounting thus accommodates Western-style trousers in that there is no



*kaeri-zuno* (retaining hook) or *kurigata* (cord knob), making it convenient to wear either through the belt or suspended from it. The materials used to make this example and the quality of its workmanship are exceptional, particularly the scabbard, which was carved with longitudinal grooves, covered with sharkskin that was pressed into the grooves, lacquered, and then polished to a flat finish. The *tsuba*, which is signed by the maker, Kitsu Zenkyo Mitsunaka (1823–1889), is made of polished *shibuichi* (an alloy of copper and silver); the other fittings are solid gold. The mounting was made for the Sakai family, lords of Shōnai domain, who possess another *toppei* mounting that was made using crocodile skin. IH





Detail of *tsuba* from cat. no. 133, showing (left to right) obverse and reverse

Hirata Haruyuki

## 134.

## *Daishō* pair of mountings with *ishimochi* and *fuji-tomoe mon* (insignia) in *maki-e* lacquer

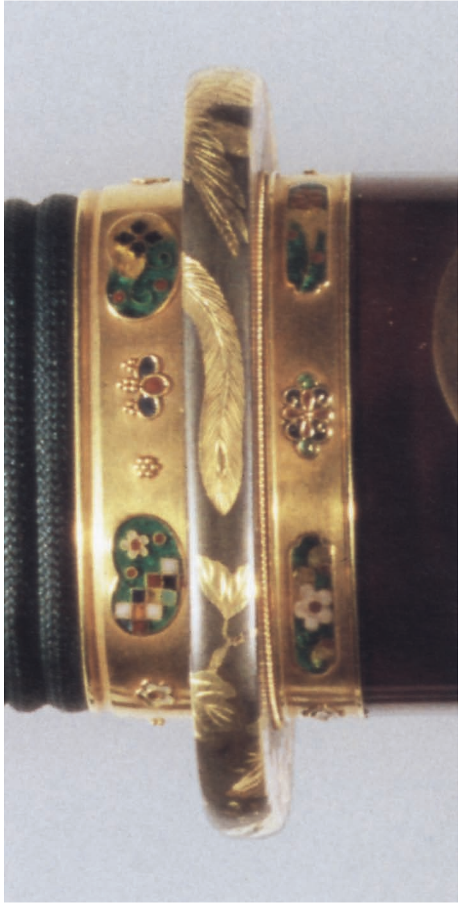
## 朱溜塗石餅藤巴紋蒔絵大小

Edo period, 19th century
Wood, lacquer, *maki-e*, gold, *shibuichi*, cloisonné, rayskin, and silk
L. of *dai*, 85.6 cm (33¾ in.); L. of *shō*, 43.9 cm (17¼ in.)
Inscribed on *fuchi*: 平田春行造 *HIRATA HARUYUKI ZŌ TSUKURU*; inscribed on *tsuba*: 秀瑞軒　後藤清明（花押） *SHUZUIKEN GOTŌ KIYOAKI* (*kaō*)
Fukuoka City Museum

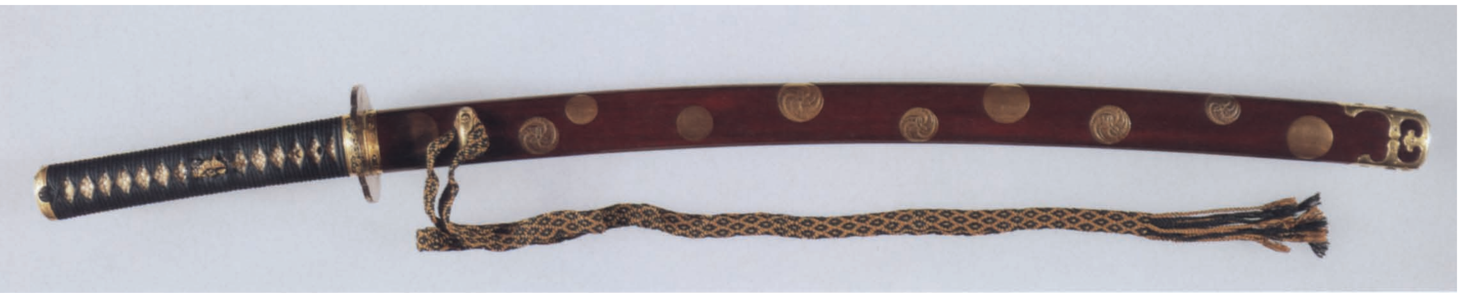
In addition to formal black-lacquered *daishō*, extravagant sets such as this pair, embellished with various kinds of lacquer and luxurious metal fittings, were popular during the late Edo period. The scabbards are lacquered in the *tamenuri* style, in which a translucent layer of lacquer is applied over a vermilion base. They are decorated with *ishimochi* and *fuji-tomoe*—a round emblem and a comma-shaped wisteria flower that are both *mon* (insignia) of the Kuroda family—in gold *maki-e* lacquer. The hilts are wrapped in white *same* (rayskin) and have pale blue bindings. Except for the *tsuba*, the fittings are all gold and were made by Hirata Haruyuki, who signed the *fuchi* (collar) "Hirata Haruyuki made this." The *menuki* are in the shape of irises and chrysanthemums; the *fuchigashira*, *saya-guchi*, *kaeri-zuno*, and *kojiri* are decorated with small flowers in cloisonné. The *tsuba* (sword guards) are made of *shibuichi* polished flat (*migaki-ji*) and are decorated with phoenixes and paulownia in gold *iro-e*. They are signed "Shuzuiken Gotō Kiyoaki" with the maker's *kaō* (monogram).

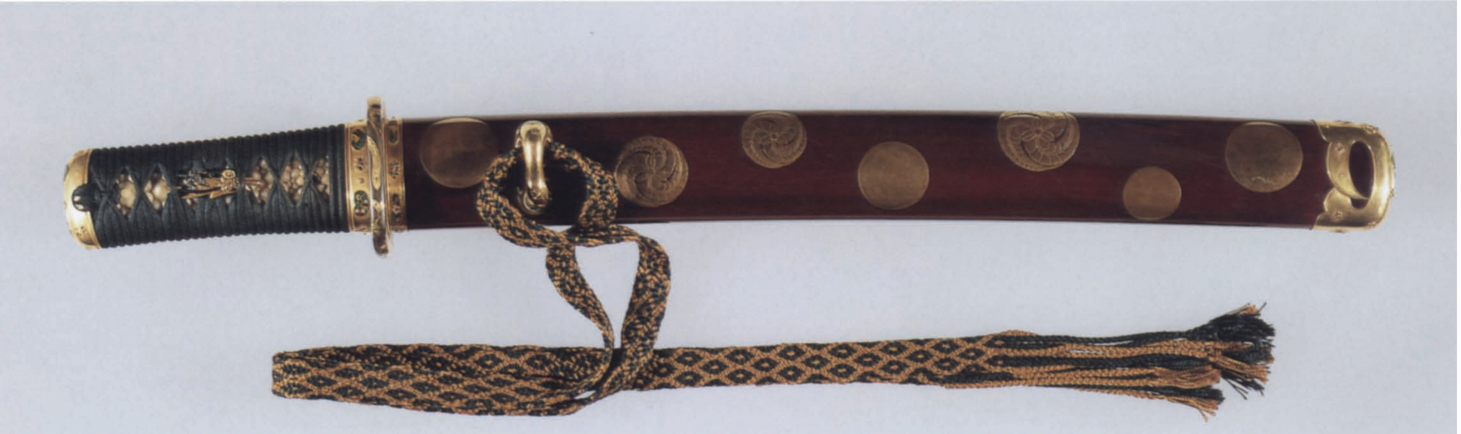
Hirata Haruyuki (1839–1911?) was the tenth and last generation of the Hirata school established by Hirata Dōjin, who had studied the cloisonné technique in the Korean Peninsula during the Momoyama period, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Hirata were the first fittings makers to employ cloisonné and thus held a unique position in Japan. They were retained by successive generations of the family of the Tokugawa shoguns.

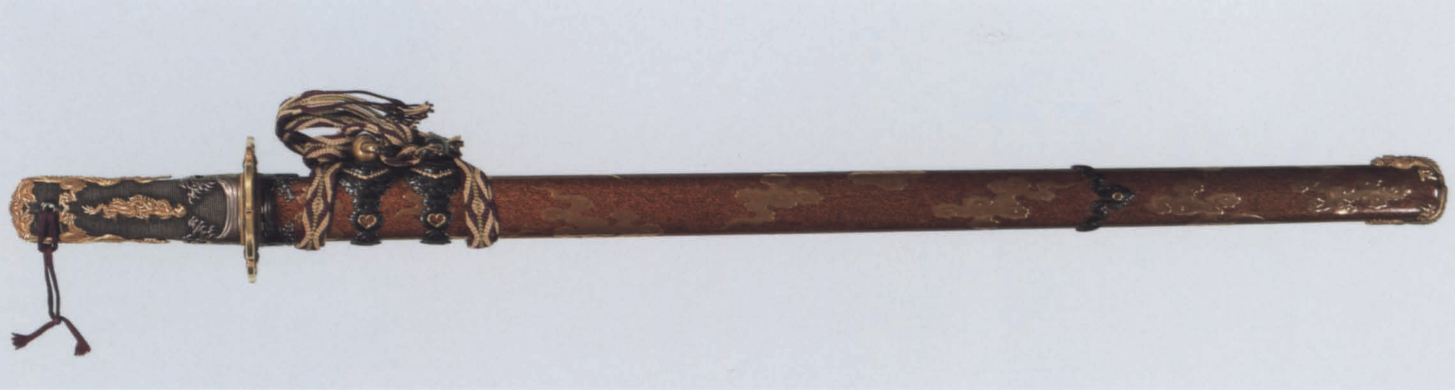
HK

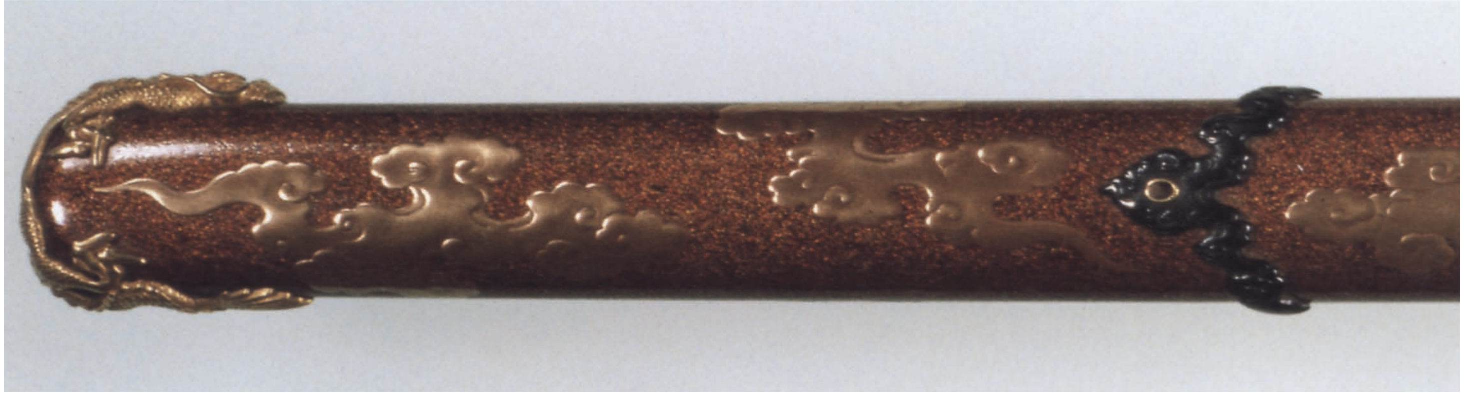


Detail of cloisonné









Kanō Natsuō

## 135.

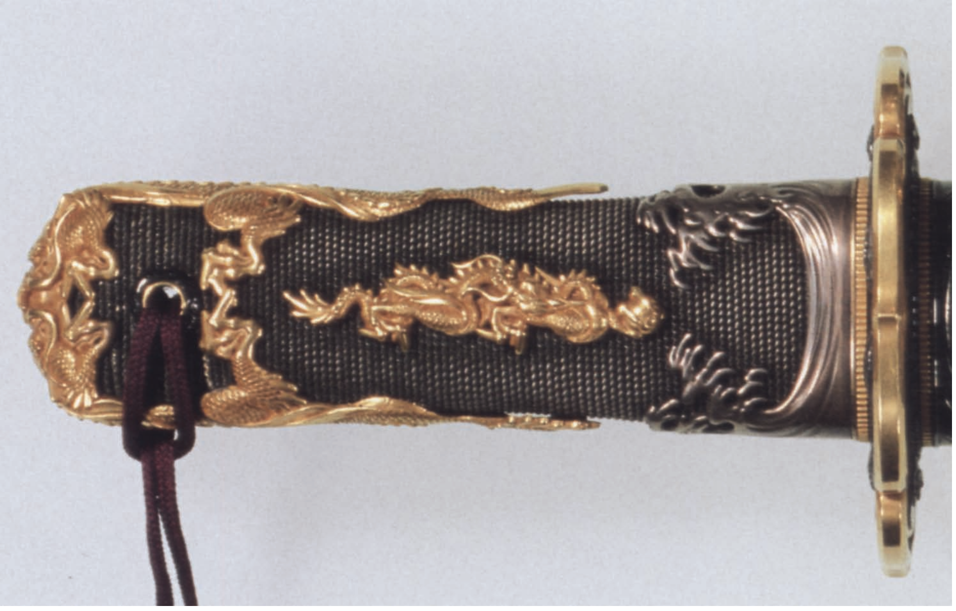
## *Chokutō* mounting with *nashiji* lacquer, water dragons, and auspicious cloud motifs

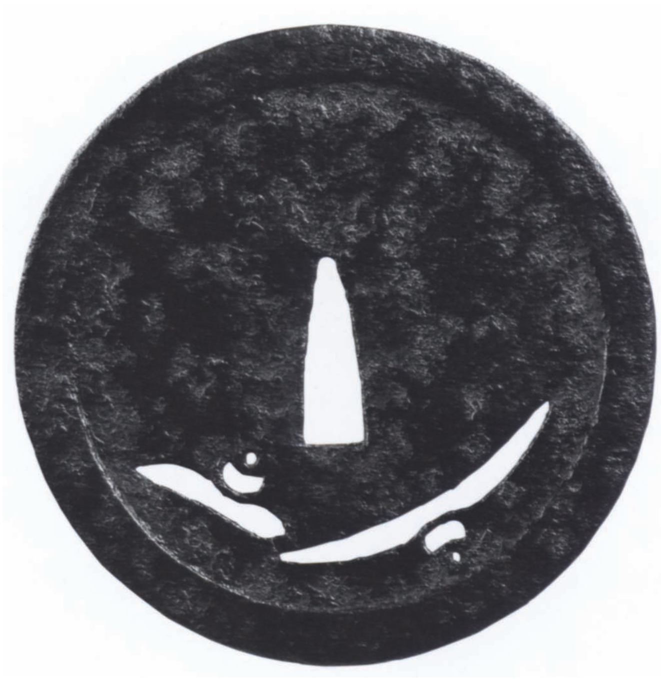
梨地水龍瑞雲文宝剣

Meiji era, 1873
Wood, gold, silver, *shakudō*, lacquer, and silk
L. 80.2 cm (31⅝ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

This mounting was made for the *chokutō* known as "Suiryuken" (cat. no. 54), originally one of the treasures of the Shōsō-in, the eighth-century repository of the Tōdai-ji temple, Nara, built to house the personal effects of the Emperor Shōmu (d. 756). In 1872 the Emperor Meiji, who greatly admired the blade, took possession of it, and the following year he commissioned Kanō Natsuō (1828–1898) to make the mounting. The hilt is clad in silver and bound with gold wire. The *menuki* (hilt fittings) are in the shape of dragons and are made of gold. The *kabuto-gane* (pommel cap) is in the shape of opposed dragons, while the *fuchi* (collar) and *saya-guchi* (scabbard mouth) are both made of silver and decorated with a design of billowing waves. The *ashi-kanamono* (suspension fittings) and *seme-gane* (scabbard ring) are made of *shakudō* with auspicious cloud motifs, and the *kojiri* (chape) is also in the shape of a dragon. All of the fittings are carved in *takaniku-bori* (high-relief sculpture). Dragon motifs carved in this fashion had been in use since the Muromachi period. The particularly intricate, skilled workmanship seen here is characteristic of Natsuō, who is considered the last great master of Japanese sword fittings.

HK





### 136.

## *Ko-katchūshi tsuba* (early armorer's sword guard) with hat motifs

笠透鐔 無銘 古甲冑師

Kamakura period, 14th century
Iron
Diam. 8.6 cm (3⅜ in.)
Private collection

The age of this relatively round *tsuba*, made of well-forged iron, is attested by the few remaining spots of lacquer, which originally coated the entire surface to prevent rust. The edge is thicker than the center, which was carved out with a chisel to leave the *mimi* (rim) raised, forming what is called a *dote-mimi* (embankment rim). There are two piercings (*sukashi*) in the shape of womens' hats below the *mune* (back edge) of the *nakago-hitsu*, the aperture through which the blade passes. The hat on the right, about twice the size of that on the left, is inverted, and its curve echoes the overall curvature of the *tsuba*. Elegant hats like these, which were worn outdoors, have been used in Japan since ancient times as a decorative motif and as family *mon* (insignia).

This type of *tsuba* is referred to as a *katchūshi* ("armorer's") *tsuba* because the pierced designs are similar to the pierced decorations of the *mempō* (face masks) of Japanese armor. It is also said that they were crafted with the same techniques used to make *kabuto* (helmets) and *kozane* (iron scales). None are signed, and they are usually large and thin with simple, unaffected designs. Many have *dote-mimi* or turned-back rims; others have hollow rims. Examples from before the Momoyama period are called *ko-katchūshi*, or "early armorer's type."

Because *tsuba* used in *hirumaki no tachi*, *kawazutsumi no tachi*, and *kokushitsu no tachi* mountings from the Kamakura and Nanbokuchō periods had to be as light as possible, so that the swords could be wielded with one hand, typically a *tsuba* made of thin iron plate was sandwiched between two large, decorative spacers (*ō-seppa*) made of leather or *yamagane* (an unrefined form of copper), possibly with *fukurin* (gilt edging) added for strength. The *dote-mimi* of this example gives the effect of *fukurin*. The piece is rather small for a *ko-katchūshi tsuba*, and since it has no apertures for a *kozuka* or a *kōgai*, it is believed to have been made for an early type of *uchigatana* mounting. The technique of chiseling away ground to form a *dote-mimi* is thought to have been pioneered on this piece, which in fact is believed to be the earliest extant example of a *katchūshi tsuba*. MM

### 137.

## *Ko-tosho tsuba* (early swordsmith's sword guard) with butterfly motif

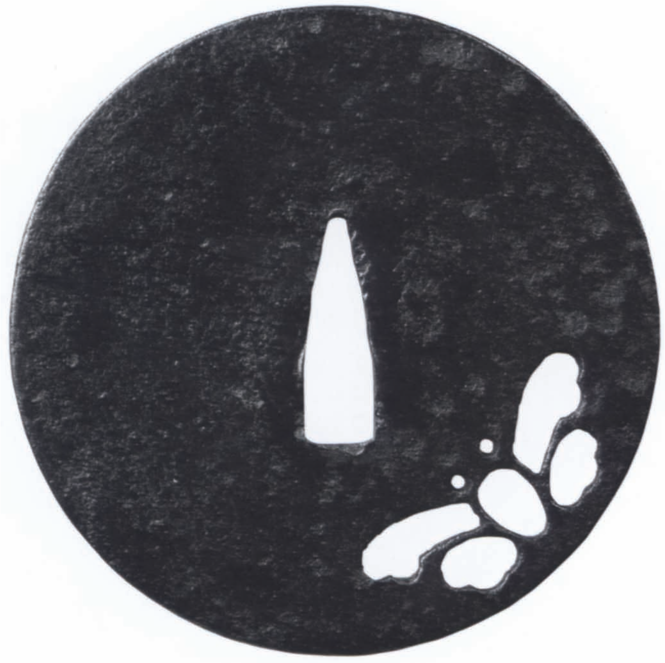
蝶透鐔 無銘 古刀匠

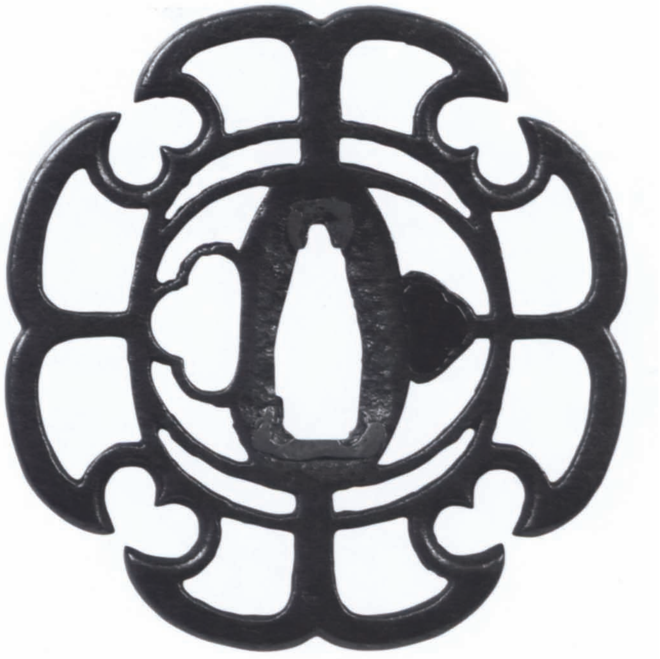
Muromachi period, 15th century
Iron
Diam. 8.5 cm (3⅜ in.)
Private collection

This round *tsuba* of particularly well-forged iron has a small amount of rust-inhibiting lacquer remaining on the surface. It thins from the center out toward the edge and has a slightly raised, rounded rim (*mimi*) of some thickness. To the lower right of the *mune* (the part of the blade aperture that opens widest, where the back of the blade would be) is a pierced motif of a butterfly. Although simple, the shape is well conceived and includes two delightful, open eyes. The absence of any other decoration gives the impression that the butterfly is flitting up toward a boundless expanse beyond the confines of the *tsuba* itself. This concept relates to how butterflies were thought to reside in a heavenly abode along with birds such as cranes and geese, one of the reasons why they have been used as decorative motifs in Japan since the Nara period.

It is believed that *tsuba* were originally made and fitted onto swords by swordsmiths. Certain early types, such as this example, are thus known as *ko-tosho*, or "early swordsmith's" *tsuba*. *Tosho tsuba* continued to be made by swordsmiths until the late Muromachi period—after the emergence of specialist makers of *tsuba*, *kozuka*, and *kōgai*—but signed examples from this time are rare. Some *tosho tsuba* were even made from the Azuchi-Momoyama to the late Edo period; these are few in number, but some are signed.

Many *tosho tsuba* are made of large, thin, well-forged iron plate and have no designs; others are decorated with small, simple pierced designs such as insects, flowers, and grasses, with rims that are not carefully shaped. They are very





similar to *katchūshi* ("armorer's") *tsuba*, and it can be difficult to distinguish between the two types. In general, *tosho tsuba* have small, simple pierced decorations and do not have folded rims, although many, such as this example, have rounded rims.

MM

### **138.**

## Owari *sukashi tsuba* (openwork sword guard) with cruciform motif

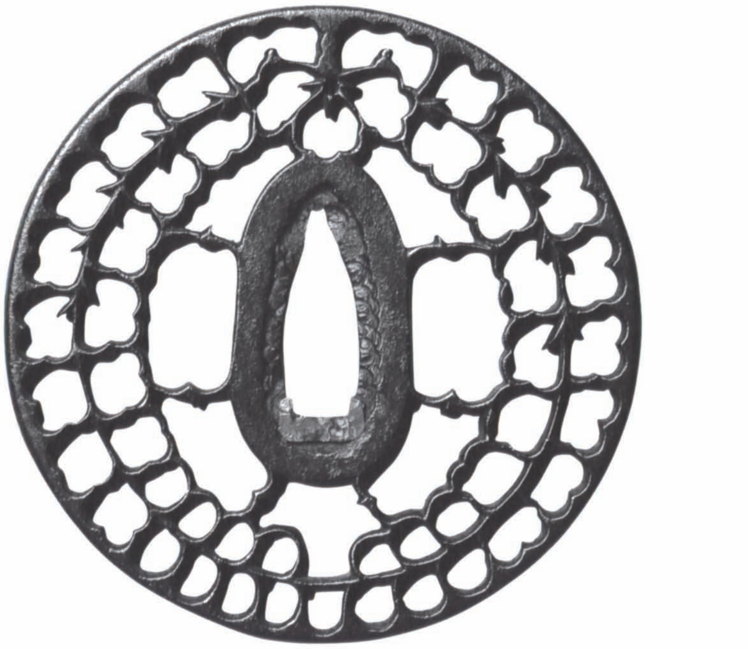
### 十字透鐔 無銘 尾張

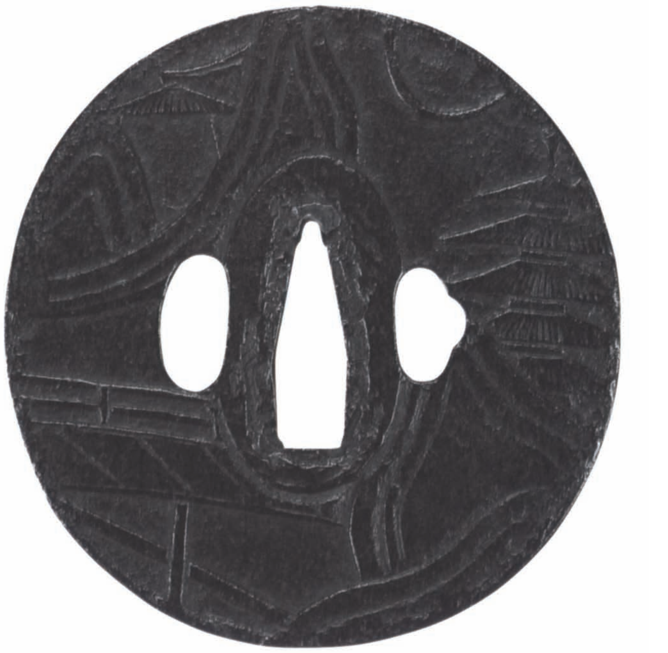
Muromachi period, 16th century
Iron
8.4 × 8.1 cm (3¼ × 3⅛ in.)
Unsigned
Private collection

Christianity was brought to Japan by the missionary Saint Francis Xavier (1506–1552), who landed in Kagoshima in the eighteenth year of the Tenbun era (1549). Following his arrival the number of Christian adherents in Japan increased gradually, beginning with the large cities of Kyūshū, under the patronage of Ashikaga Yoshiteru and Oda Nobunaga, and eventually spreading out to the extent that daimyo such as Omura Sumitada, Otomo Sorin, and others were converted and baptized. As a symbol of Christianity, the cross came to be used as a family *mon*, on banners, ceramics, and lacquerware, and on military equipment such as the *tsuba*, as seen here. This example, which is slightly extended vertically, is made of thick, well-forged iron that thins slightly and gradually from the thick *kaku-mimi* (squared rim) toward the center. It is an extremely fine, well-preserved *tsuba* exuding strength and power, with broad piercings and large *i-no-me* ("boar's-eye") openwork designs at the four corners that help define the overall *mokkō* (quatrefoil) shape. The two interrupted, crescent-shaped piercings at top and bottom center are possibly stylized representations of the chains from which a crucifix would be suspended from the neck, perhaps as if it were placed on a table with the chains draped over and around it.

Early *sukashi*, as this type of *tsuba* is known, generally have simple, pierced designs. Beginning about the middle Muromachi period, the *ji-sukashi* technique became prevalent, in which the ground was pierced to create negative space and the design was formed by the remaining iron portions. These designs eventually became larger and more complex. "Owari" refers to *sukashi* made by metalworkers in Owari province (in present-day Aichi Prefecture) from about the middle Muromachi period through the early Edo period. Compared with other *sukashi*, Owari pieces are thicker and become somewhat thinner from the periphery toward the center. Their forging is unsurpassed, and they are renowned for a gnarled surface known as *tekkotsu* ("iron bones"), which has small protrusions of iron scattered about the rim. While many are said to be crude, they often bear original, creative compositions. They are also very attractive as a component of a sword mounting, and for that reason many samurai considered them the greatest of the old iron *tsuba*.

It is not difficult to imagine *tsuba* such as this one becoming the forefront of a vogue for various aspects of *nanban* (foreign) culture, particularly since the metalworkers of Owari province were especially esteemed by Oda Nobunaga (who was born in Owari) and by the high-ranking samurai around him. In the twelfth year of the Eiroku era (1569), the Christian missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597) was granted an audience with Nobunaga, who in 1575 would defeat the Takeda cavalry, reputedly the strongest military force in Japan at the time. He did so in part by organizing the first large-scale attack using musketeers armed with matchlock guns, which had been introduced from Portugal in 1543. Nobunaga not only permitted the propagation of Christianity in Japan, he became a fervent





admirer of *nanban* culture, even conceding to the construction of *nanban-ji* ("southern barbarian temples"), meaning Christian churches.

The "boar's-eye" motif at the corners of this innovative piece is unique among Owari work and among *sukashi* in general. Until the *tsuba*'s rediscovery in the 1970s, its whereabouts had been unknown since it was published in the 1935 *Nihon-To Koza*, a multivolume study of Japanese swords and sword fittings written by Ogura Suemon, a famous fittings connoisseur. He was also proprietor of Amiya, a renowned gallery dealing in Japanese swords, fittings, and mountings.

MM

### 139.

## *Kyō-sukashi* (openwork sword guard) with wisteria motif

下がり藤透鐔 京透

Momoyama period, 17th century
Iron
8.3 × 8.4 cm (3¼ × 3¼ in.)
Unsigned
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures,
Hyōgo Prefecture

This type of *tsuba* is known as *kyō-sukashi*, in which thin iron plate is pierced with intricate patterns or motifs. The lines of iron are extremely slender, resulting in *tsuba* that are exceedingly delicate and sophisticated in appearance. Typical designs, many of which are elegantly light-hearted in theme, include trees, grasses, and flowers; animals; and views with *torii* (shrine gates), oxcarts (wheel motifs), and bridges.

The wisteria motif seen on this example appears on a wide selection of Japanese craftworks and in many forms, both as a decorative motif and as family *mon* (insignia). Here the well-structured design takes full advantage of the *tsuba*'s circular shape by arranging the hanging wisteria flowers symmetrically around the *katana-hitsu*, the central aperture through which the tang is passed. An outstanding example of Kyōto elegance, this *tsuba* imparts a sense of both stability and refinement indicative of a perfect design.

IT

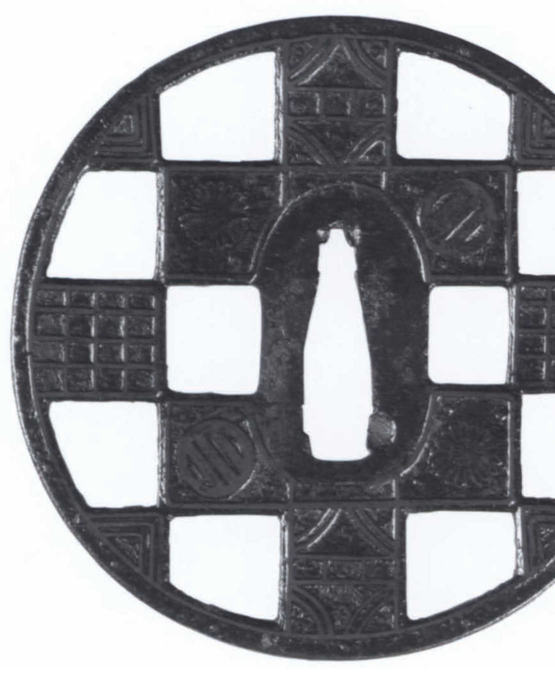
### 140.

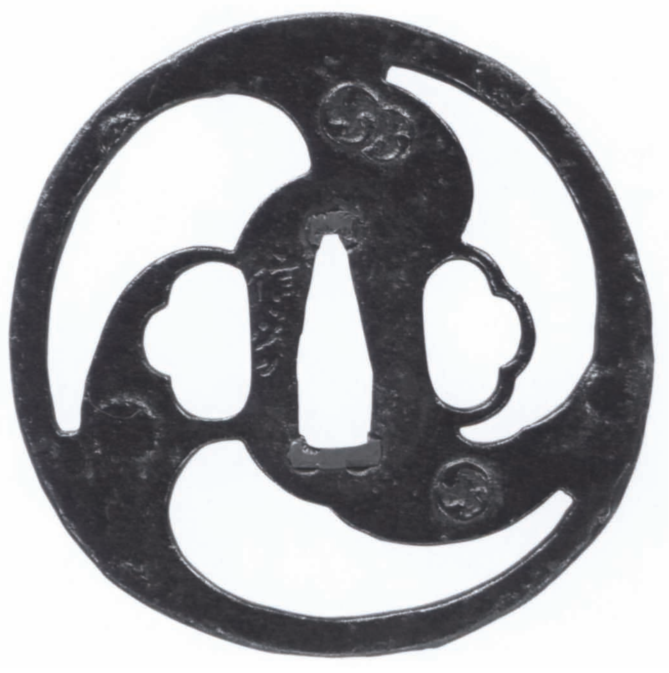
## Kamakura *tsuba* (sword guard) with Sangatsu-do tower and bridge

三月堂塔橋鍔 無銘：鎌倉

Muromachi period, 16th century
Iron
8.3 × 8 cm (3¼ × 3⅛ in.)
Unsigned
Tokyo National Museum

The mountain pavilion and bridge carved in sunken relief on this iron *tsuba*—both part of the Tōdai-ji, a temple in Nara—are detailed in fine *kebori* (line) engraving. As a result of the chiseling used to create the relief, the ground of the piece is relatively thin. Although the name for this type of work is a "Kamakura *tsuba*," such pieces were not made in Kamakura. Rather, the moniker derives from the resemblance of these *tsuba* to the trays, incense boxes, and other items referred to as Kamakura *bori* (sculpture), which typically are decorated with bird and flower motifs carved in wood and then lacquered, in imitation of Chinese carved lacquer. Many Kamakura *tsuba* have bold designs, including depictions of towers, bridges, flowers, birds, and dragonflies, while others have simple, refined piercings that recall those on so-called armorer's *tsuba* (see, e.g.,





cat. no. 136). One theory of their origin holds that they were made in Nara, an idea supported by an extant piece signed *WASHU JU YOSHIKANE*, "Washu" being an old name for Yamato, in present-day Nara Prefecture. HK

### 141.

## Ōnin *tsuba* (sword guard) with lattice piercing and inlaid *mon* (insignia)

格子透家紋象嵌鐔 応仁

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Muromachi period, 16th century
Iron and brass
Diam. 8.4 cm (3¼ in.)
Unsigned
Private collection

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The iron of this round, thin *tsuba* is somewhat mottled in texture and is pierced with a lattice design edged in brass. The individual squares and other portions of the pattern are decorated with *mitsubiki-ryo* (three bands in a circle) and chrysanthemum *mon* (family insignia) as well as smaller lattice patterns and other geometric motifs in *suemon zōgan* (inset appliqué) that anticipate the kinds of designs later made in *shippo* (cloisonné).

Such pieces are referred to as "Ōnin" *tsuba* because in the past they were said to have been made during the Ōnin era (1467–69), in the Muromachi period. That date has never been verified, however, and in fact the description was applied only in the twentieth century. They are characterized by small piercings and brass inlay—sometimes, as in this example, with family *mon*. Today the so-called Ōnin *tsuba* are believed to date from the late Muromachi period (16th century), but they have a more archaic appearance than *Heianjo-zōgan tsuba*, which were made in Kyōto in the sixteenth century and, like Ōnin work, employ brass inlay. Ōnin *tsuba* can thus be said to represent the first use of brass inlay by Japanese metalworkers. Brass was imported from China during the Muromachi period and is said to have been very expensive at the time.

The thin plate and perfect roundness of Ōnin *tsuba* recall the shape of *katchūshi* ("armorer's") *tsuba* (see cat. no. 136). Two other iron *tsuba* with this pierced lattice pattern are known, and both of them have grass and flower motifs of *suemon-zōgan*, suggesting that the lattice design was greatly admired by samurai of the time. This example was passed down in the Uesugi family. MM

Nobuie

### 142.

## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with triple *tomo-e* (comma motifs)

重要文化財 巴透鍔

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron
8.5 × 8.4 cm (3⅜ × 3¼ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 信家 *NOBUIE*
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

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This *tsuba* is made of excellently forged, lustrous lacquer-black iron that has a *tsuchime-ji* (finely hammered) surface, which is pierced with a large triple *tomo-e* (comma motif) design. Smaller *tomo-e* and chrysanthemum motifs are carved in low relief on the surface. The maker, Nobuie, was a *tsuba* specialist who worked in the Owari *sukashi* style, making pieces with simple, pierced designs (see, e.g., cat. no. 138). He also made *tsuba* that are carved in somewhat low relief on a rather thick iron ground, including numerous pieces with *waka* poems, titles of Buddhist sutras, and names of Shinto deities engraved in shallow *kebori*, such as catalogue number 143. This is an exceptional piece: there are very few extant *tsuba* by Nobuie like it, and none that match it in terms of the superb quality of the forging. HK

Nobuie

## 143.
## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with *waka* poem
## 鍔 和歌毛彫鍔

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron
Diam. 8.6 cm (3⅜ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 信家 *NOBUIE*
Tokyo National Museum

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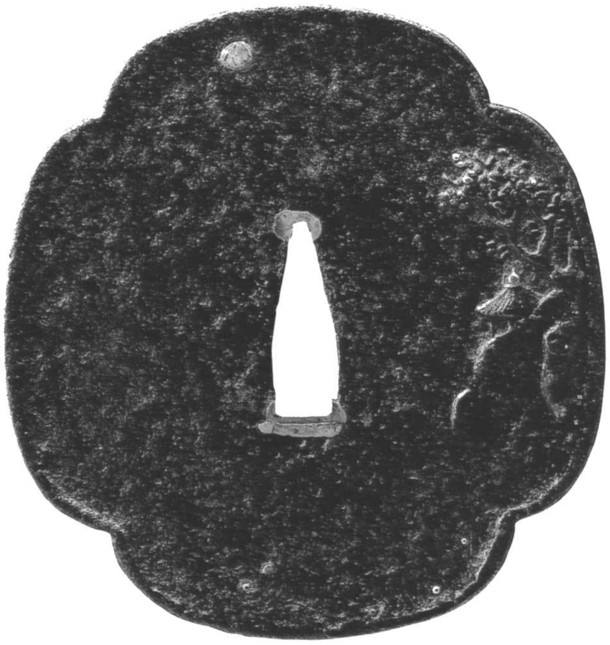
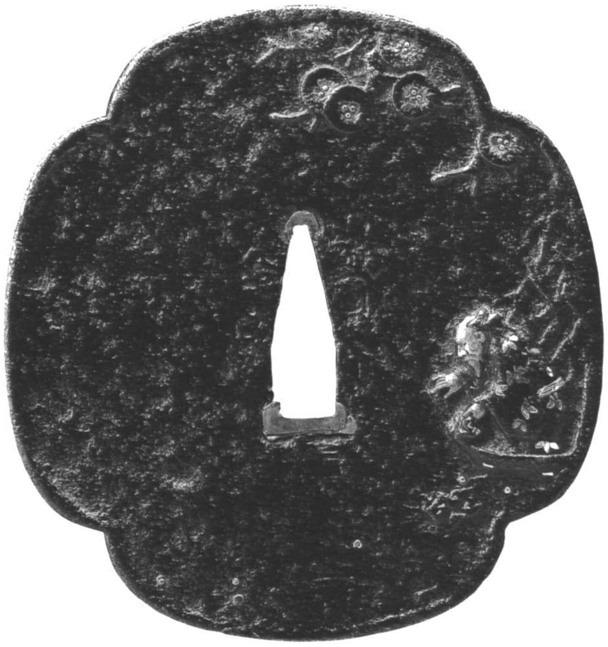
Many of Nobuie's *tsuba* are made of thick iron plate; this example, at 10 millimeters, is the thickest known. Its unusual shape comprises two overlapping circles or partial lobes known as *kemari* after its resemblance to a traditional type of Japanese football, which today is used only on certain ceremonial occasions. The *mimi* (rim) appears to be strongly chiseled, and the ground has a delicately formed *tsuchime-ji* (finely hammered) surface. The forging is likewise simple and strong, with an air of quiet refinement. The written characters covering the surface in shallow *kebori* (line) engraving read: *KIRIMUSUBU TACHI NO SHITA KOSO JIGOKU NARE FUMIKOMITE MIYO SOKO GA GOKURAKU* (When swords are crossed it is hell, but to step forward is paradise). Although the phrase is essentially an exhortation to courage in battle, on some of Nobuie's other works he inscribed *kyoka* (comic verse) expressing an altogether different attitude to warfare.

HK


Reverse


Obverse

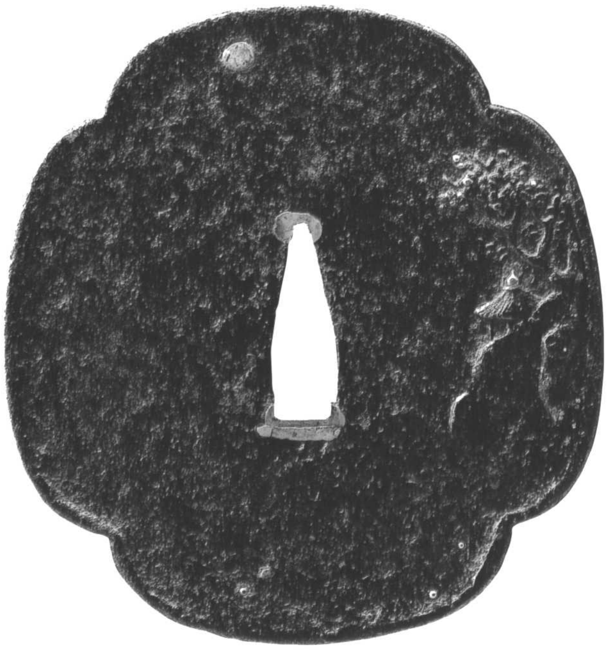
Kaneie

## 144.

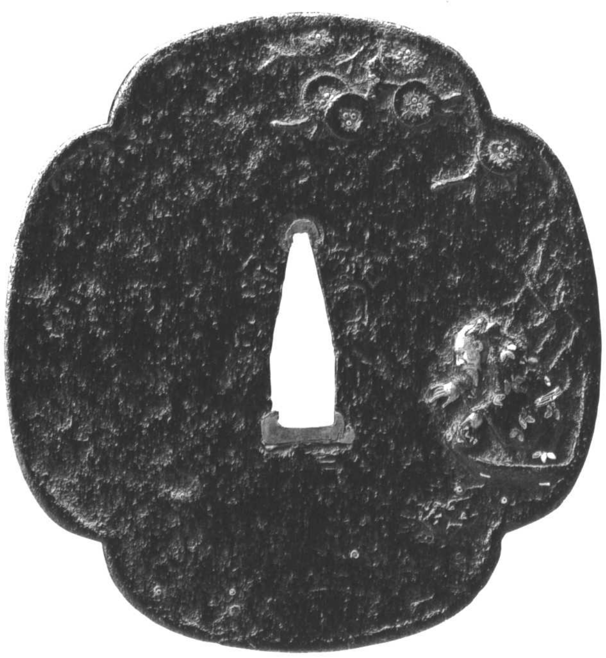
## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with Chōkarō

## 重要美術品 長果老図鐔

Momoyama period, 16th century
Iron, gold, and silver
9.3 × 8.7 cm (3⅝ × 3⅜ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 山城国伏見住金家
*YAMASHIRO (NO) KUNI FUSHIMI JU KANEIE*
Fukuoka City Museum
**Important Art Object**



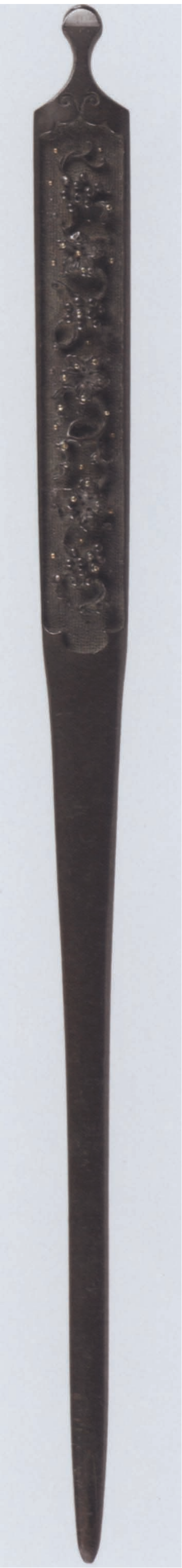
Reverse



Obverse

During the Muromachi period, as the Japanese sword evolved from the slung *tachi* style of mounting into the *katana*, which is carried thrust through a belt at the waist, the *tsuba* used in such mountings also changed greatly. Those made for *tachi* mountings had *ō-seppa* (large spacers covering either side of the *tsuba*) that were usually made of thin metal decorated with motifs such as birds and flowers. The spacers were assembled together with the body of the *tsuba* itself, which was made of either copper or leather. The iron *tsuba* used in *uchigatana* mountings were decorated in *sukashi* (piercing), in which the motifs were chiseled directly into the *tsuba* itself. The *seppa* thus became smaller in diameter (roughly the size of the mouth of the hilt and scabbard) and were undecorated.

Muromachi-period *tsuba* were embellished mostly with patterns such as those found on *katchūshi* ("armorer's") *tsuba* or Owari *sukashi* pieces (see cat. nos. 136, 138). Pictorial representations became customary beginning in the Momoyama period. The metalworker Kaneie—who lived in what is now Fushimi, in Kyōto, but whose origins are unknown—was a pioneer of this type of *tsuba*, specializing in the depiction of people and landscapes carved in *usuniku-bori* (low relief) with small amounts of gold or silver inlay. This *tsuba* is characteristic of his work. The landscape and the figure of Chōkarō, one of the Eight Immortals of Taoism—in Japan one of the *sennin*, mountain-dwelling hermits said to be endowed with supernatural powers—appear in perspective, an effect of subtle variations in the height of the relief. The piece was passed down in the Kuroda family of Fukuoka. HK



### 145.

## *Kōgai* (hairdressing implement) with grapevine motif

## 葡萄図笄 無銘 古美濃

Muromachi period, 15th century
*Shakudō* and gold
L. 22.1 cm (8¾ in.); W. at shoulder, 1.4 cm (½ in.)
Unsigned
Private collection

Although made of *shakudō*—a copper alloy containing gold that is patinated to a dark blue-black color by chemical means—over time this rather slender *kōgai* has turned a color closer to that of *yamagane*, a copper alloy that contains a small amount of an impurity called *shirome* (aresenic-containing antimony). The *kata* (shoulder) is quite wide, and the *mimi-kaki* (ear scraper) is prominently raised. The line from the tip of the *kata* along the *dō* (body) through the *kiji-mata* (literally "pheasant thigh," referring to the contour from the *dō* along the stem) to the *ho-saki* (point) has very little curvature, giving the piece a sharp overall form. The *dō* is decorated with a grapevine motif executed in high-relief chiseling on a fine *nanako* ground, in which the individual, finely punched dots are distributed like grains of millet. The five-petal blossoms and fruit of the grapevine are colored in gold *iro-e*. On the vine and leaves—and on the *nanako* ground from place to place—are drops of morning dew represented by minute gold and silver inlay, an exquisite evocation of morning that remains remarkably vivid after more than six centuries.

This piece is an example of *Ko*-Mino ("old" Mino) work, referring to sword fittings made in Mino province (present-day Gifu Prefecture) from about the early Muromachi period to the Momoyama period (late 14th–early 17th century). No signed examples of *Ko*-Mino work exist. Most are decorated with autumn flowers and insect motifs, although there are some with deer and monkeys. This is a typical *Ko*-Mino *kōgai*: made of *shakudō*, with a deeply chiseled design; narrow overall, with a swelling shoulder; a prominently raised *mimi-kaki*; and a long *sao* (stem).

The *kōgai*, also known as a *kami-kaki* (hairdresser), was used to arrange the hair and, occasionally, to clean the ears when wearing a helmet or a *kanmuri* (Chinese-style cloth cap). They were fitted into a slot on the *omote* (obverse) of *uchigatana* and *koshigatana* scabbards, meaning on the surface that faced out when the mounting was worn through the belt. Their use dates back to the fourteenth century. MM

Attributed to Gotō Yūjō

### 146.

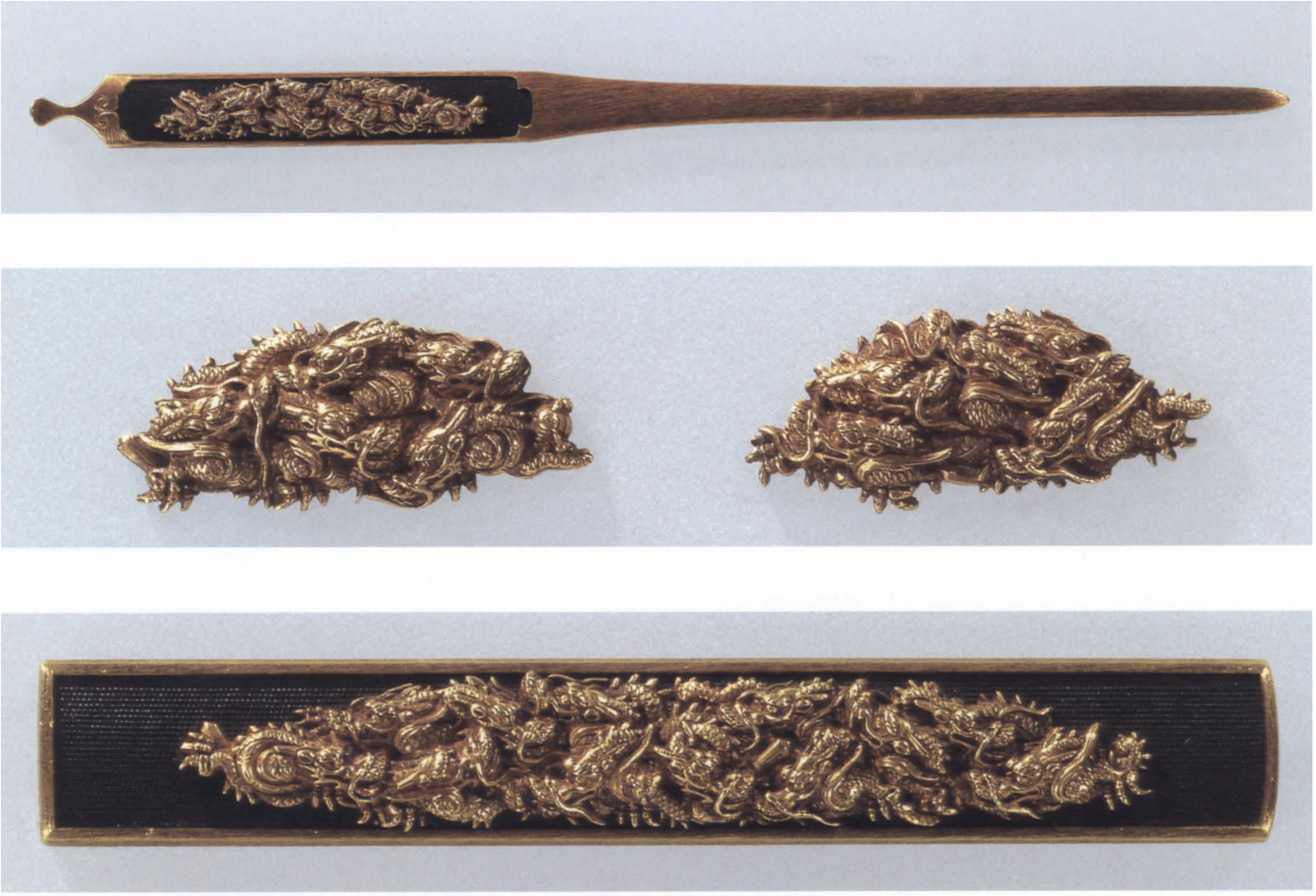
## *Mitokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with thirty dragons

## 三十疋龍三所物 後藤祐乗

Muromachi period, 15th century
Gold
L. of *kozuka*, 9.8 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *kōgai*, 22.2 cm (8¾ in.); L. of *menuki*, 3.7 cm (1½ in.), 3.8 cm (1½ in.)
Unsigned; inscribed on reverse of *kozuka* and *kōgai*: 紋 祐乗 光孝 （花押） MON YŪJŌ MITSUTAKA (*kaō*) (repoussé [by] Yūjō, [inscribed by] Mitsutaka)
Tokyo National Museum

During the Edo period, it was mandatory that a formal *daishō* pair of sword mountings be fitted with *mitokoromono*—a set of *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *menuki* matching in material, manufacturing technique, and design—made by the Gotō family. It is said that the first generation of the Gotō family, Yūjō (1440–1512), was originally a samurai, and that he was retained by Yoshimasa, the eighth Ashikaga shogun (r. 1449–74), as a maker of decorative sword fittings.

Before Yūjō, the metalworkers of Mino province (present-day Gifu Prefecture) made sword fittings chiseled with sharply cut designs, known as Mino *bori* (see cat. no. 145). By virtue of his superior skill, Yūjō was able to make sword fittings dexterously chiseled with motifs of dragons and *shishi* (Chinese lions), in accordance with the tastes of the *bushi*



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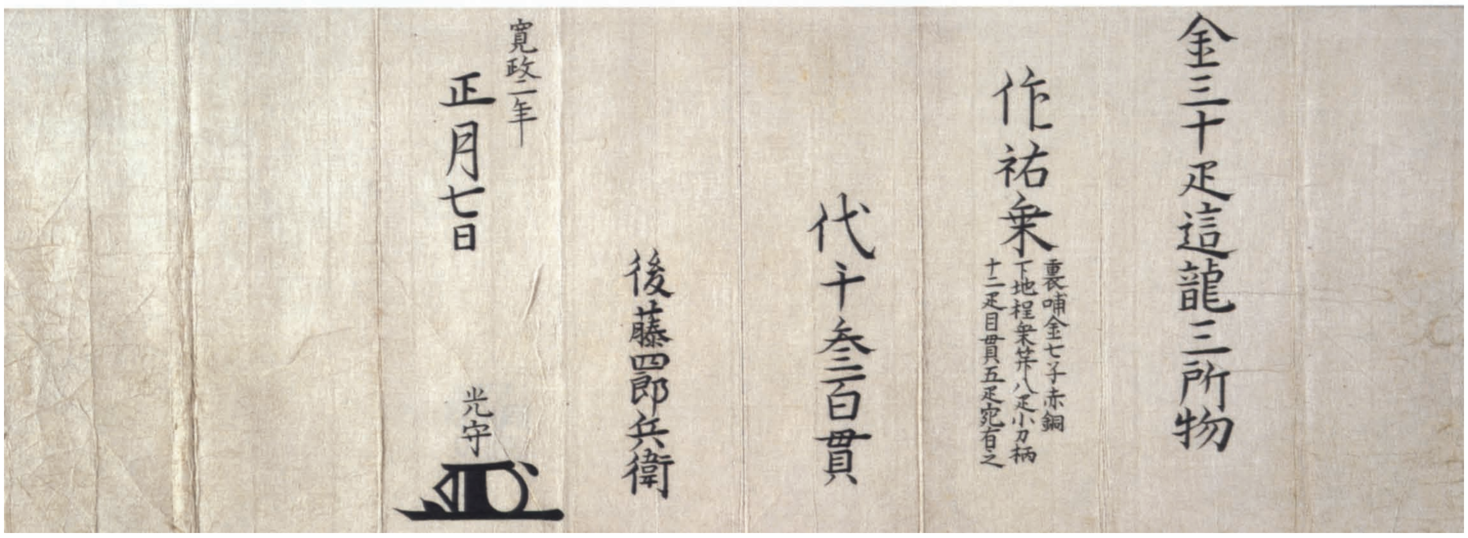


金三十疋這龍三所物
作祐乗（裏哺金七子赤銅下地程乗笄八疋小刀柄十二疋目貫五疋宛有之）
代千参百貫
後藤四郎兵衛
寛政二年
正月七日
光守

147

(military class), opening up new decorative possibilities. The Gotō family prospered for seventeen generations after Yūjō thanks to the patronage of such powerful figures as Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa family. Although they specialized in the manufacture of sword fittings, they also undertook appraisals (authentication and valuations) and were generally in a position of enormous influence in the world of decorative sword-fitting makers.

This *mitokoromono* is unsigned, but in 1790, during the Edo period, it was appraised as the work of Yūjō by Mitsumori (see also cat. no. 147), the fourteenth generation of the Gotō family. The actual inscription with the attribution is by Mitsumori's father, Mitsutaka. The two *menuki* (hilt fittings), the *kozuka* (utility knife handle), and the *kōgai* (hairdressing tool) are embellished with a total of thirty dragons made by repoussé, with additional details chiseled on the surface.

HK

### 147.

### *Origami* (certificate of appraisal) written by Gotō Mitsumori

折紙 後藤光守筆 1枚

Edo period, 1790
Ink on paper
35.2 × 48.5 cm (13⅞ × 19⅛ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

Just as the Hon'ami family issued *origami* (certificates of appraisal) for swords, the Gotō family—descended from Gotō Yūjō (1440–1512)—issued them for sword fittings. This *origami* accompanies the *mitokoromono* with thirty dragons (cat. no. 146). The appraisal was made by the fourteenth generation of the Gotō family, Keijō, also known as Mitsumori (1751–1804), who attributed the carved components to Yūjō and the ground of the *kozuka* and *kōgai* to the ninth generation, Teijō (1604–1673). He also valued the set at 1300 *kan*, an extraordinarily high sum for the time and possibly the highest valuation ever made by him.

HK

Attributed to Gotō Sōjō

### 148.

### *Mitokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with walnut designs

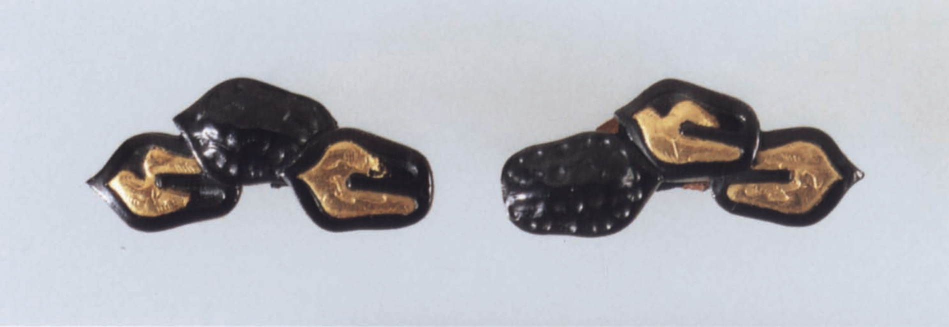
胡桃図三所物 後藤宗乗

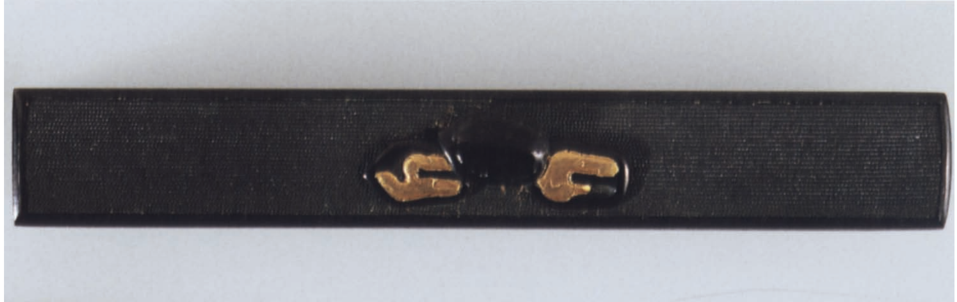
Muromachi period, 16th century
*Shakudō* and gold
L. of *kozuka*, 9.8 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *kōgai*, 21.1 cm (8¼ in.); L. of each *menuki*, 3.3 cm (1¼ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

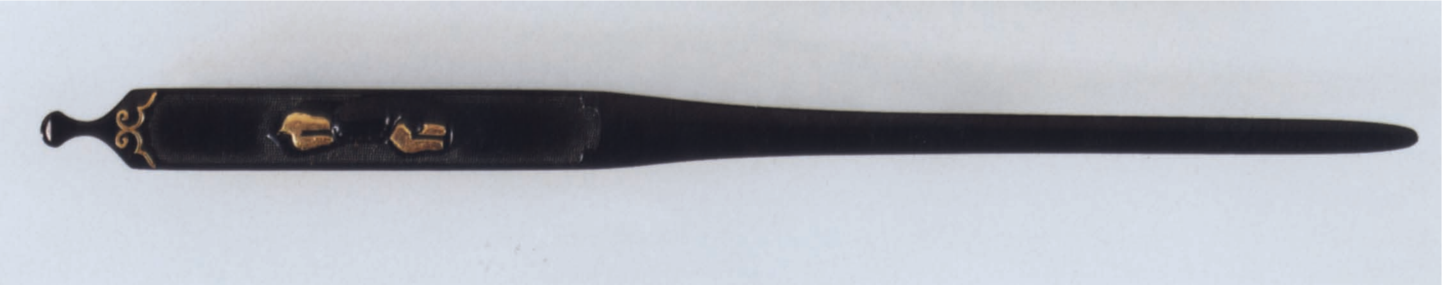
In 1797 the fourteenth generation of the Gotō family, Keijō Mitsumori (see cat. no. 147), authenticated this *mitokoromono* set in an *origami* as the work of the second-generation master Gotō Sōjō (1487–1564). The *kozuka* and *kōgai* each have three walnut motifs in *takabori suemon* (high-relief appliqué) on a *shakudō nanako* (punched dot) ground with gold *uttori iro-e*. The *menuki* are decorated with *uttori iro-e* over *kata-bori* (repoussé) on a *shakudō* ground.

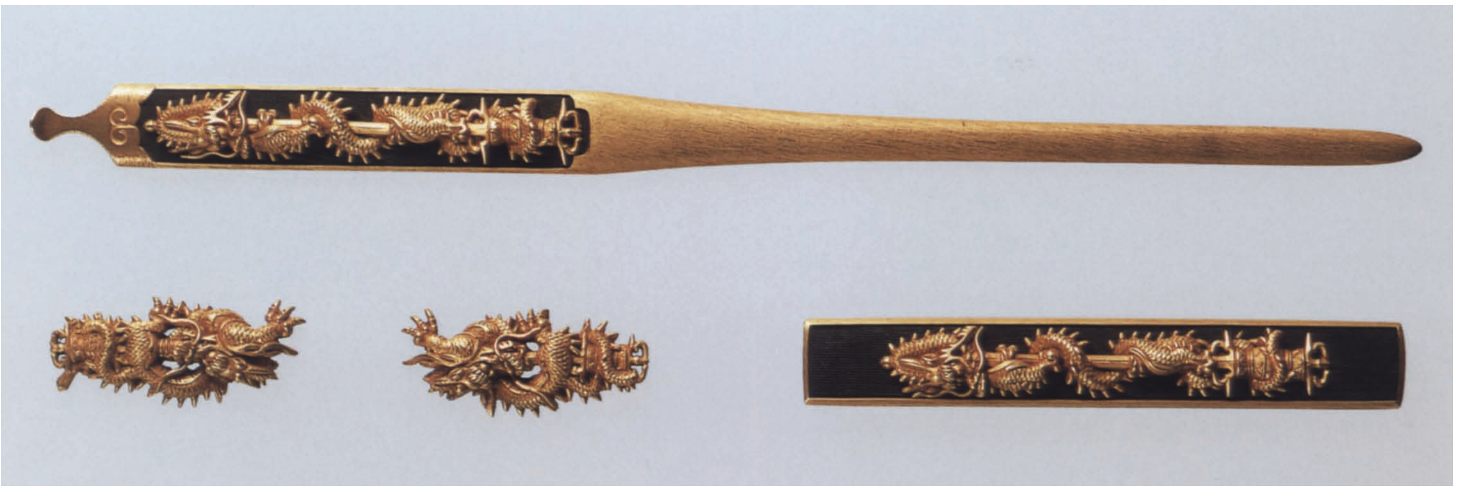
*Uttori iro-e* is a technique whereby the components of a design are covered in thin gold sheet that is then pressed down around the base of each motif. It was frequently used by members of the Gotō family until the third generation, Jōshin. The walnut motif is likewise often seen on Gotō work, but rarely on *mitokoromono*. Although Sōjō made fittings in the style of his father, Yūjō, founder of the Gotō school (see cat. no. 146), his pieces tend to have a greater feeling of flatness.

HK









Attributed to Jōshin

## 149.

## *Mitokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with *kurikara* motifs

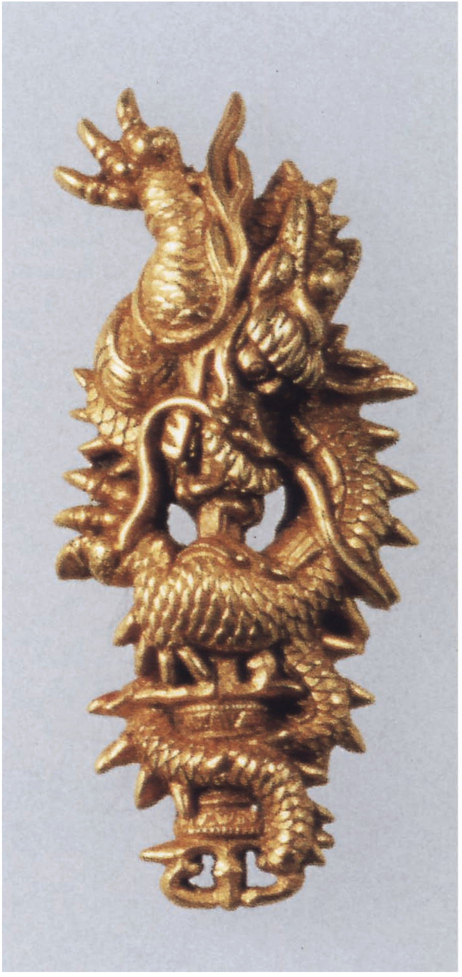
倶利伽羅龍図三所物

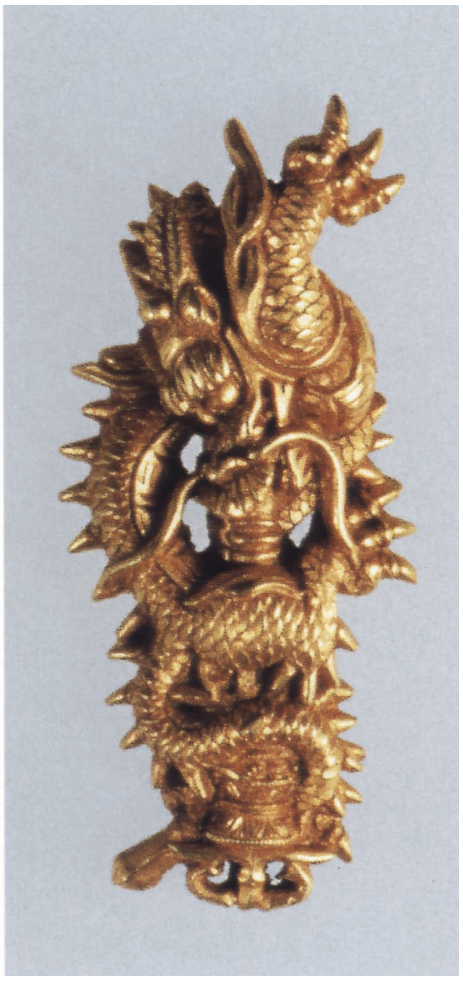
Momoyama period, 16th–17th century
*Shakudō* and gold
L. of *kōgai*, 21 cm (8¼ in.)
Unsigned; inscribed on reverse of *kozuka* and *kōgai*: 紋 乗真 光孝（花押）MON JŌSHIN MITSUTAKA (*kaō*) (repoussé [by] Jōshin, [attributed and inscribed by] Mitsutaka)
Sano Art Museum, Shizuoka Prefecture

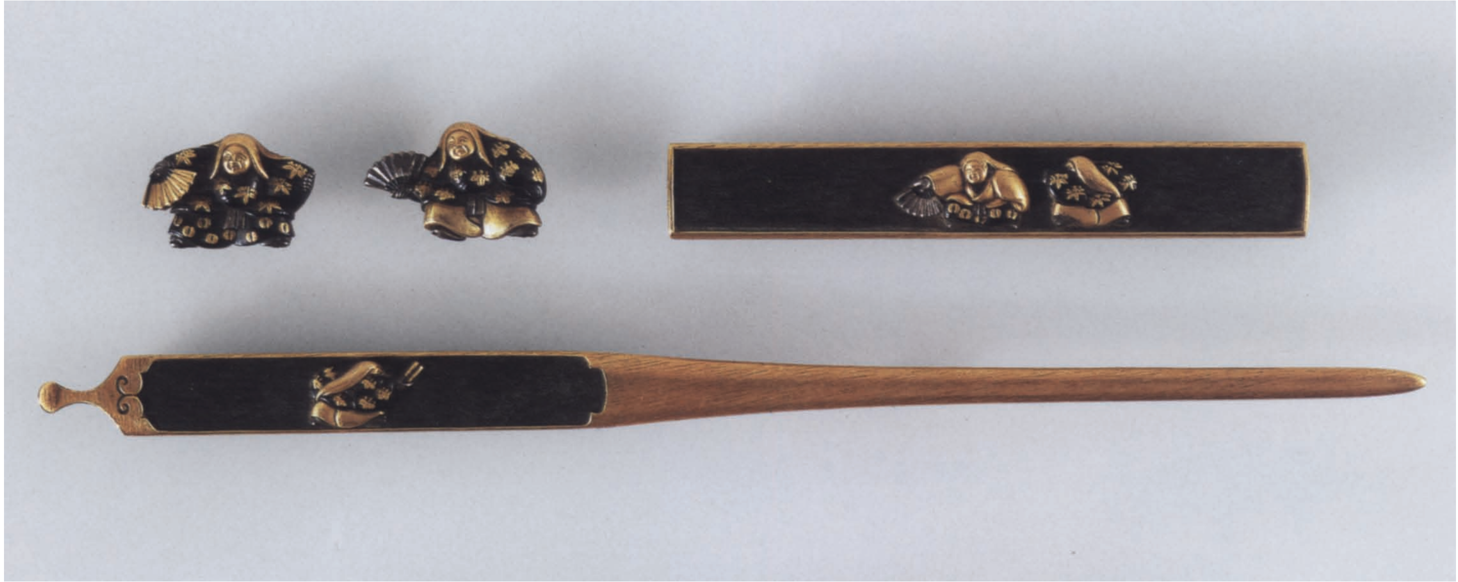
This *mitokoromono*, or matching set of sword fittings, was made for an *uchigatana* mounting. All of the pieces are embellished with a motif called a *kurikara*, said to have originated in India and believed to represent a dragon attempting to swallow the *sankozuka-ken*: the straight sword with a three-pronged *vajra* hilt wielded by Fudō Myōō, a popular deity in Japanese Buddhism. Along with other powerful creatures such as *shishi* (Chinese lions) and dragons, the design was a favorite among samurai of the Sengoku-jidai, or Age of Wars (ca. 1467–1568).

The *kurikara* motif was a speciality of the Gotō family of fittings makers, founded by Yūjō (see cat. no. 146). The third generation, Jōshin (1511–1562), is renowned for his particularly vigorous sculptural style. The two *kurikara*-shaped *menuki* and those fixed on the *kozuka* and *kōgai* against a *shakudō nanako* ground were made by him and are recorded in the *Gotō Ke Monjo* (Designs of the Gotō Family), which also records a "hidden" chisel stroke used during appraisals to attribute works to Jōshin. The set was previously in the collection of the Inagaki family.

WT







Gotō Tokujō

## 150.

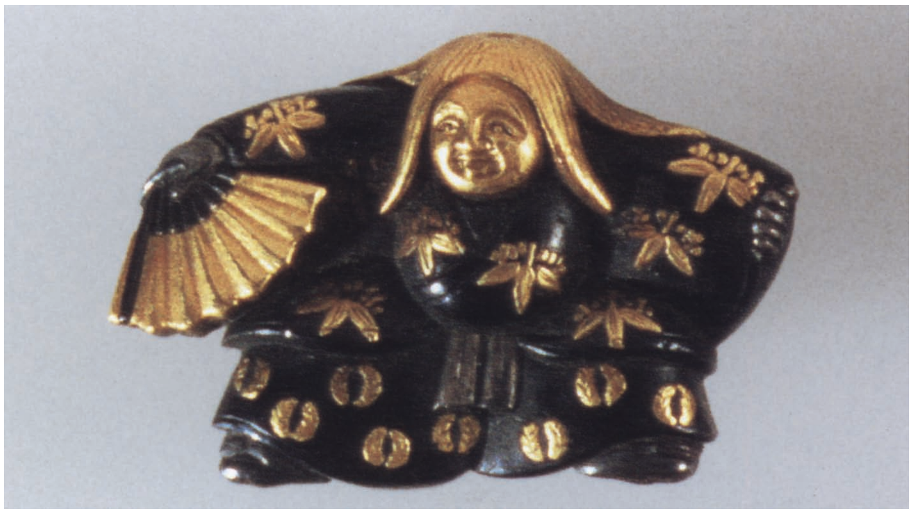
## *Mitokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with *shōjō* (Nō characters)

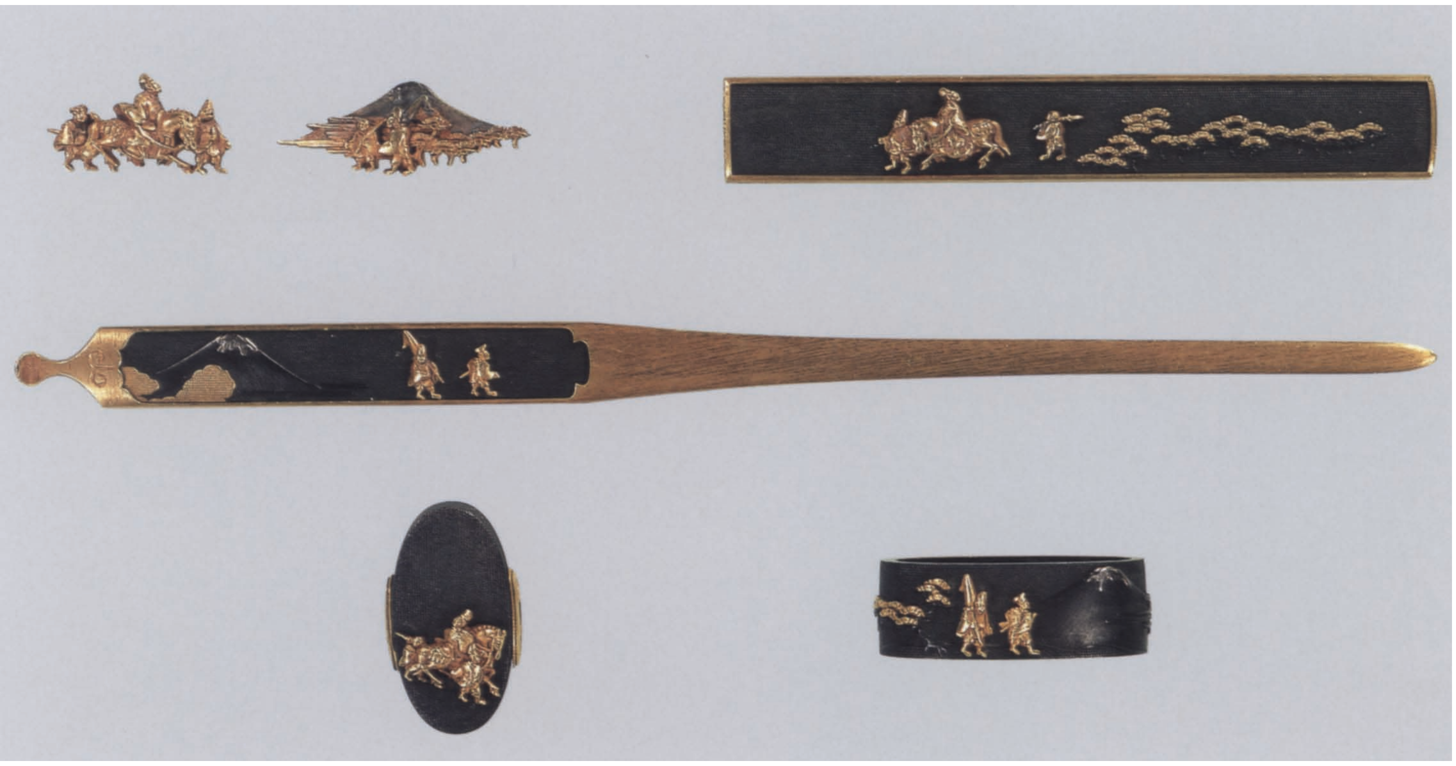
## 猩々舞図三所物

Momoyama period, late 16th–early 17th century
*Shakudō*, gold, and silver
L. of *kozuka*, 9.8 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *kōgai*, 21.1 cm (8¼ in.); L. of each *menuki*, 2.7 cm (1¹⁄₁₆ in.)
Inscribed on *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *menuki*: 後藤徳乗 GOTŌ TOKUJŌ (*kaō*)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

Tokujō (1550–1631) was a fifth-generation metalworker of the Gotō family. The *kozuka* and *kōgai* of this *mitokoromono* set by him are decorated with the figures of *shōjō* (characters from Nō theater) in *taka-bori suemon* (high-relief appliqué) with gold and silver *iro-e*: specifically, a technique known as *kise*, in which a thin sheet of silver or gold is affixed with a type of solder. They are both signed by the maker along with his *kaō* (monogram). The two *menuki* (hilt fittings) are made of *shakudō* worked in *kata-bori* (repoussé) with gold and silver *iro-e* and are signed, respectively, GOTŌ and TOKUJŌ. As these are the only existing pieces signed by Tokujō, they are valuable study material not only for his oeuvre but for the entire Gotō school.

The Gotō were retained by the Ashikaga shoguns beginning with the family's founder, Yūjō, through Kōjō, the fourth generation, who was active when the Ashikaga were defeated. Tokujō, Kōjō's son, then went to work for the successors to the Ashikaga: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the Tokugawa shoguns. During Nobunaga's rule Tokujō manufactured the large gold coins called *oban*, and he continued in that office under Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa family. Subsequent generations of the Gotō were involved in the manufacture of gold coins as a family business for more than three hundred years, well into the Edo period. Tokujō's designs, which are larger than those of his father, reflect the decorative splendor of the Momoyama-period style. HK





Gotō Mitsumasa

**151.**

## *Yotokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with Narihira journeying to the east

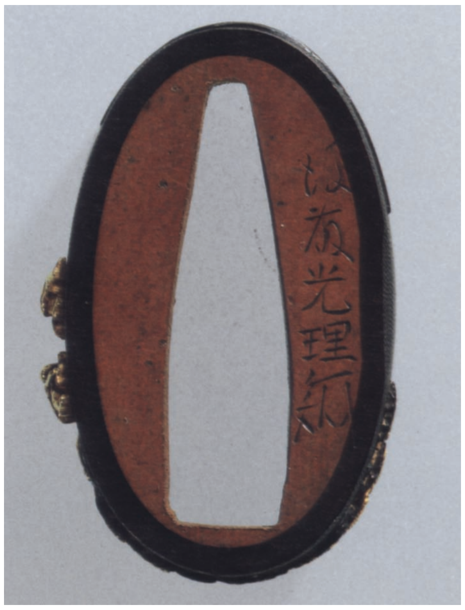
## 業平東下り図揃金具

Edo period, 18th century
Gold, silver, and *shakudō*
L. of *kozuka*, 9.8 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *kōgai*, 21.2 cm (8⅜ in.); W. of *menuki*, 3.8 cm (1½ in.), 2.5 cm (1 in.); H. of *fuchi*, 1.3 cm (½ in.); H. of *kashira*, 3.2 cm (1¼ in.)
Inscribed on *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *fuchi*: 後藤光理 GOTŌ MITSUMASA (*kaō*)
Tokyo National Museum

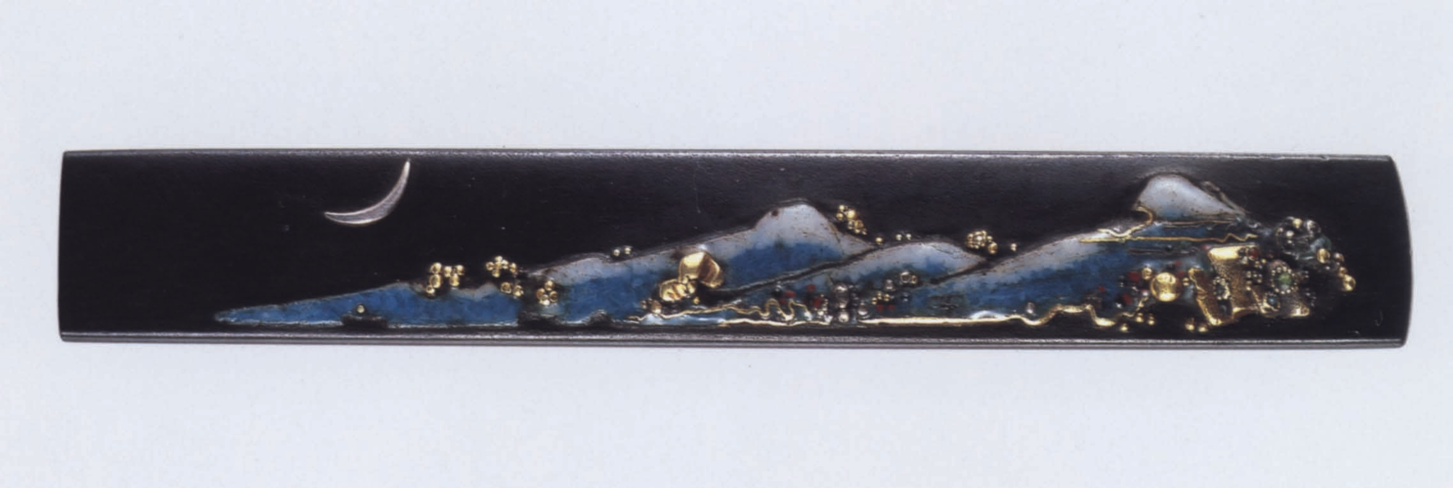
This *yotokoromono*, or set of four sword fittings, comprises a *mitokoromono* (see, e.g., cat. no. 146) together with a *fuchi* (collar) and *kashira* (pommel cap), often referred to together as the *fuchigashira*. The maker was Gotō Mitsumasa (1689 or 1695–1742), a twelfth-generation artisan of the Gotō family, who in 1722 succeeded Tsujō as head of the Gotō house and subsequently was renamed Jujō. This set—a rarity because the Gotō, who specialized in *mitokoromono*, made few *fuchigashira* sets—depicts an episode from the life of the Heian-period aristocrat Ariwara no Narihira as recorded in a *waka* poem. We see Narihira (the rider) with his attendants as they travel east from Kyōto. Just as Mount Fuji becomes visible, snow begins to fall and settles on the mountain like the white spots on the back of a fawn. The set has a *shakudō nanako* ground and the figures are worked in a type of *iro-e* known as *kise*, a method of gilding in which thin gold sheet is soldered to the *shakudō* ground. The snow on the peak of Mount Fuji is depicted in silver.

Before Gotō Tokujō, who was active in the Momoyama period (see, e.g., cat. no. 150), the Gotō family typically embellished their works with motifs such as *shishi* (Chinese lions) and dragons. Gradually they came to incorporate Japanese historical subject matter as well, such as battle scenes. At the time Mitsumasa was active, another leading fittings maker, Yokoya Sōmin, achieved renown as a *machi-bori* artist (see cat. no. 158). Eventually competition arose between the Gotō and the great *machi-bori* fittings makers, including such masters of the Nara school as Yasuchika, Joi, and Toshinaga. Indeed, the emergence of hitherto unknown motifs in Gotō work at this time can be attributed to the influence of the more freely expressive style of the *machi-bori* artists.

HK



Top of *fuchi* (collar), showing inscription



Attributed to Hirata Dōjin

## 152.

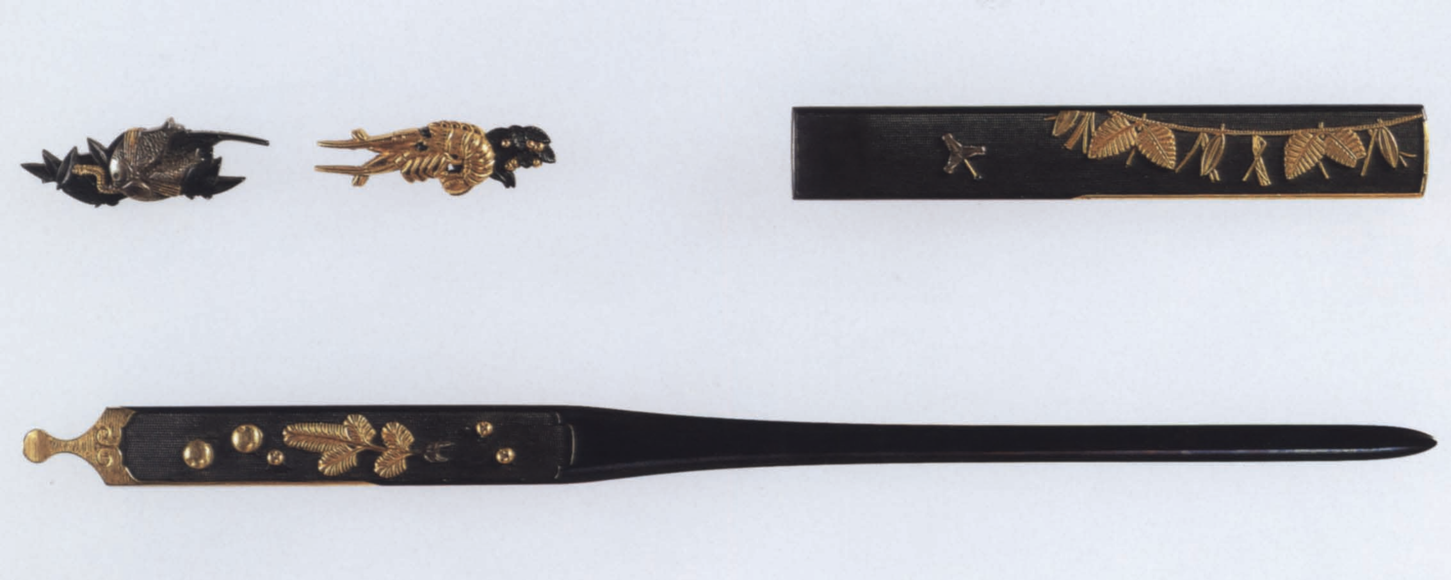
## *Kozuka* (utility knife handle) depicting a night on a snowy mountain

雪山夜景図小柄 無銘 平田道仁

Edo period, 17th century
*Shakudō*, gold, and enamel
L. 9.6 cm (3¾ in.)
Unsigned
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture

On this *kozuka*—the handle of a small utility knife that was fitted into the side of a scabbard—the floating crescent moon, the splendor of deepening dusk, and the outline of the mountains covered in snow are skillfully executed in cloisonné enamel. The forest at the foot of the mountains is likewise expressed decoratively and abstractly by means of gold, red, green, and dark blue cloisonné. The piece exemplifies the kind of stylish accessory that for the samurai transcended practical necessity.

It was made by Hirata Dōjin (1591–1646), founder of the Hirata school of cloisonné specialists. Dōjin introduced the art of cloisonné to Japan from the Korean Peninsula and established it as a decorative technique, one that became particularly popular during the Momoyama period, in accordance with the refined tastes of the time. Many of the early cloisonné pieces depict birds, insects, scenes of Mount Fuji, and related themes and were made using opaque enamels known as *dei-shippo* (muddy cloisonné); translucent enamels were introduced later. Dōjin was retained by Tokugawa Ieyasu, and his descendants continued as retainers of the Tokugawa family in a direct line until Haruyuki, who was active during the rule of the tenth Tokugawa shogun, during the Bakumatsu period (1850–68) (see cat. no. 134). Following the fall of the Tokugawa house, Haruyuki and his school employed the cloisonné technique to make medals for the new Meiji government. IT



Yoshioka Inaba (no) Suke

## 153.

## *Mitokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with New Year's decorations

正月飾図三所物

Edo period, 17th century
*Shakudō*, silver, and gold
L. of *kozuka*, 9.7 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *kōgai*, 21.2 cm (8⅜ in.); L. of each *menuki*, 3.9 cm (1½ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of *kozuka* and *kōgai*:
吉岡因幡介 YOSHIOKA INABA (NO) SUKE
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

All of the designs on this *mitokoromono* set are objects or motifs that in Japan are associated with or used as decorations for celebrations of the New Year. The *kozuka* is embellished with *shimenawa* (sacred straw rope) and the *kōgai* with pine branches, all executed in high-relief *suemon-zōgan* (inset appliqué) of gold and silver *iro-e* on a *shakudō* ground with a *nanako* surface (punchwork, comprising dots said to resemble fish roe). The two *menuki*, one in the shape of a lobster and the other a crane, are worked in *kata-bori* (repoussé) with gold and silver *iro-e*. Both animals symbolize longevity, as does the pine, since it is evergreen. Suspended from the *shimenawa* are pieces of paper alternating with *shida* (ferns), which were hung over gates and doorways to prevent the entry of supernatural beings who might bring uncleanliness, evil, or misfortune.

The maker of the set, Yoshioka Inaba (no) Suke, was retained as a metalworker by the Tokugawa shogun. He was one of nine generations of his family to make fittings, beginning with the founder, Shigetsugu (1569–1653), and continuing through the Edo period. Whereas the Gotō family principally made *mitokoromono*—matching sets of fittings comprising a *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and a pair of *menuki*—the Yoshioka family made all types of sword fittings, including *tsuba* (sword guards) and *fuchigashira* (matching collar and pommel cap). From about the middle of the Edo period they also inlaid the gold inscriptions of the names of smiths on the tangs of swords authenticated by the Hon'ami family. The Yoshioka employed *taka-bori* (raised designs), *suemon* (appliqué), *hira-zōgan* (flat inlay), and other decorative techniques that the Gotō family did not use. They also frequently depicted birds, flowers, and everyday vessels and implements instead of the Chinese people and warriors commonly found on Gotō work.

HK

Attributed to Hayashi Matashichi

### 154.

## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with pierced pine-tree motif

遠見松透鐔 無銘 林又七

Edo period, 17th century
Iron
Diam. 8.4 cm (3¼ in.)
Unsigned
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture

Hayashi Matashichi was a gunsmith, as were his father and brother. His father had worked for Katō Kiyomasa, a daimyo during the Sengoku-jidai (Age of Wars), but after relinquishing that position was a retainer of the Hosokawa family, lords of Higo domain (in present-day Kumamoto Prefecture). The Hayashi school became the largest group of *tsuba* makers in Higo and exerted an enormous influence on other makers of iron *tsuba* during the early Edo period.

Matashichi made iron *tsuba* using a technique known as *ji-sukashi*, in which ground is removed and the design is formed by the portions of iron that remain. He decorated some of his works with applied *kin-zōgan* (gold inlay). He also made a small number of *ita-tsuba*, which are flat and have no piercing, and embellished them in gold *nunome-zōgan* ("textile" inlay, analogous to damascening), in which metal sheet or wire is hammered into a crosshatched surface. A number of signed pieces by him survive. The design of distant pines was a favorite of his, and a number of such works are known. This example is made of well-forged iron and has an unusual wavy rim. The elegant silhouettes of the pine trunks curving up from bottom left are skillfully depicted through piercing, and the overall composition creates an impression of a wide, open space even as it retains the essential strength of the *tsuba* as a practical object, characteristic of Matashichi's superb artistry. IT

Attributed to Shimizu Jingo

### 155.

## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with hawk and monkey

猛禽捕猿図鍔 無銘 清水甚五

Edo period, 17th century
Iron, brass, and copper
7.4 × 7.3 cm (2⅞ × 2⅞ in.)
Unsigned
Tokyo National Museum

The hawk is made of brass and is shown with a monkey it has captured, which is depicted in high-relief copper inlay. The delicate surface texture of the large, rather thick iron plate, known as *tsuchime-ji* ("stone ground," made by fine hammering), contributes to the impression of refined simplicity. The motif was applied using *suemon-zōgan* (inset appliqué), in which the hawk and monkey were each carved separately and inlaid into the plate of the *tsuba*.

The attributed maker, Shimizu Jingo, was retained by the Hosokawa family, lords of Higo domain (in present-day Kumamoto Prefecture). He is representative of a group of *tsuba* makers who were retained by the Hosokawa and thus are known collectively as the Higo *kinko* (see, e.g., cat. no. 154). These makers, including the Hayashi, Nishigaki, and Hirata schools, all made *tsuba* with refined pierced designs in lustrous black iron plate as well as others with gold *nunome*, or "textile-grain" inlay. Jingo's work exhibits a particularly bold approach to design and creates a considerable impression of depth. HK

Attributed to Miyamoto Musashi

### 156.

## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with "sea cucumber" motif

左右海鼠透鐔 無銘 武蔵

Edo period, 17th century
Copper
7.1 × 6.8 cm (2¾ × 2⅝ in.)
Unsigned
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture

With its two large, pierced openings and plain copper ground, this *tsuba*, though simple, exudes elegance and dignity. Because the open spaces resemble *namako* (sea cucumbers), the motif has become known as *namako-zukashi*, and it can be found on many iron *tsuba*. The maker, Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645), was the originator of the design. He was also the most highly regarded swordsman of his time, and he made objects such as this *tsuba* as a kind of diversion. Renowned as a painter and calligrapher as well, he created numerous ink paintings expressing the concept of *ken zen no ichi*, or "sword and Zen in accord." IT

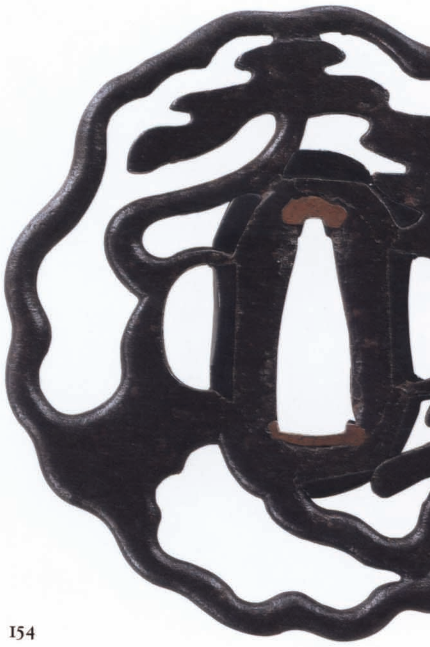
### 157.

## *Ko*-Akasaka *tsuba* (sword guard) with plum-bough motif

梅見樹透鍔 古赤坂

Edo period, 17th century
Iron
8.6 × 7.8 cm (3⅜ × 3⅛ in.)
Unsigned
Private collection

There are a number of theories about the origins of Akasaka *tsuba*, the most convincing being that they came from Kyōto. The ancestor-founder of the Akasaka school, Tadamasa, was active in the early seventeenth century; the school continued with the second generation, also named Tadamasa, followed by the third generation, Tadatora. Their works are referred to as *Ko*-Akasaka ("early" Akasaka), but no signed examples



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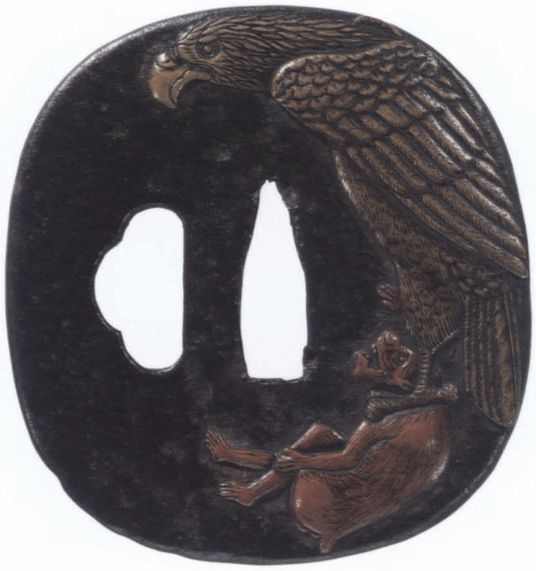

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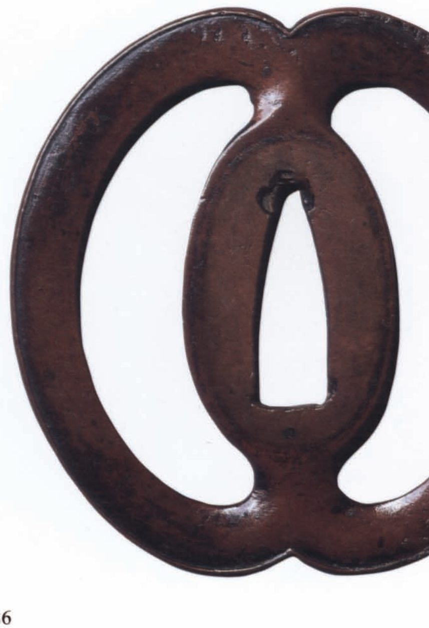

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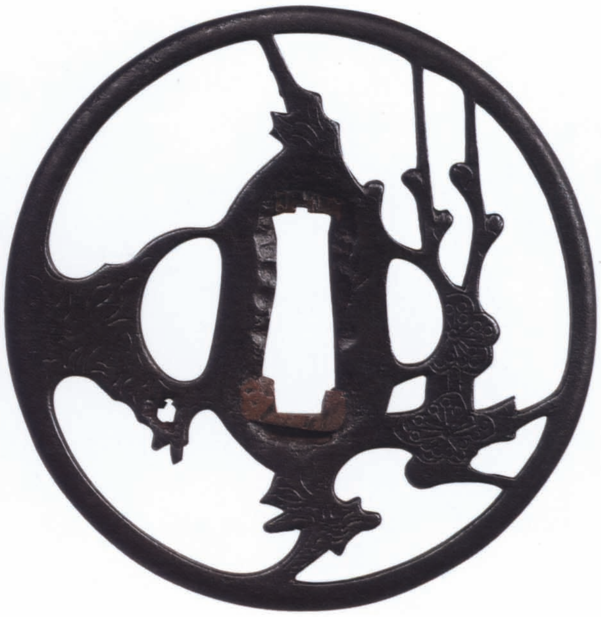

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survive. There are, however, a few signed pieces by the fourth generation, Tadatoki, and many subsequent Akasaka *tsuba* makers signed with the name "Tadatoki." In the Bunka and Bunsei eras (1804–29), Tadashige, Tadayoshi, and Tadanori, among other Akasaka artists, formed a large group who are representative of Edo-period makers of pierced *tsuba*.

Akasaka *tsuba* combine the delicacy of *kyo-sukashi* pieces with the strength of Owari *sukashi* (see cat. no. 138), particularly in their rounded *mimi* (rims) and wide, pierced designs, which contribute to an overall impression of sophistication and elegance. The earliest ones have designs of insects, flowers, and grasses; later, depictions of Japanese and Chinese traditions, Nō themes, and other related motifs gradually became established. Many Akasaka *tsuba* were carried back to the provinces as souvenirs by country samurai who had been in Edo under the *sankin kotai* system (see cat. no. 210). This example is pierced overall with a design of plum boughs whose open blossoms are depicted in *kebori* (line engraving). The thickness is even, and the *mimi* is rounded. The *kozuka hitsuana* and *kōgai hitsuana* (the two smaller apertures for the *kōgai* and *kozuka*) are of different sizes—that for the *kozuka* being the larger—characteristic of *Ko*-Akasaka work. Because the Akasaka craftsmen lived in Edo, far from the centers of iron production, for the sake of economy many of their *tsuba* were made using a process known as *sanmai-gitae* (three-sheet forging), in which a sheet of poor-quality iron was sandwiched between two better-quality pieces. This *tsuba*, made using only two layers of fine-quality iron, is thus thought to have been a special commission.

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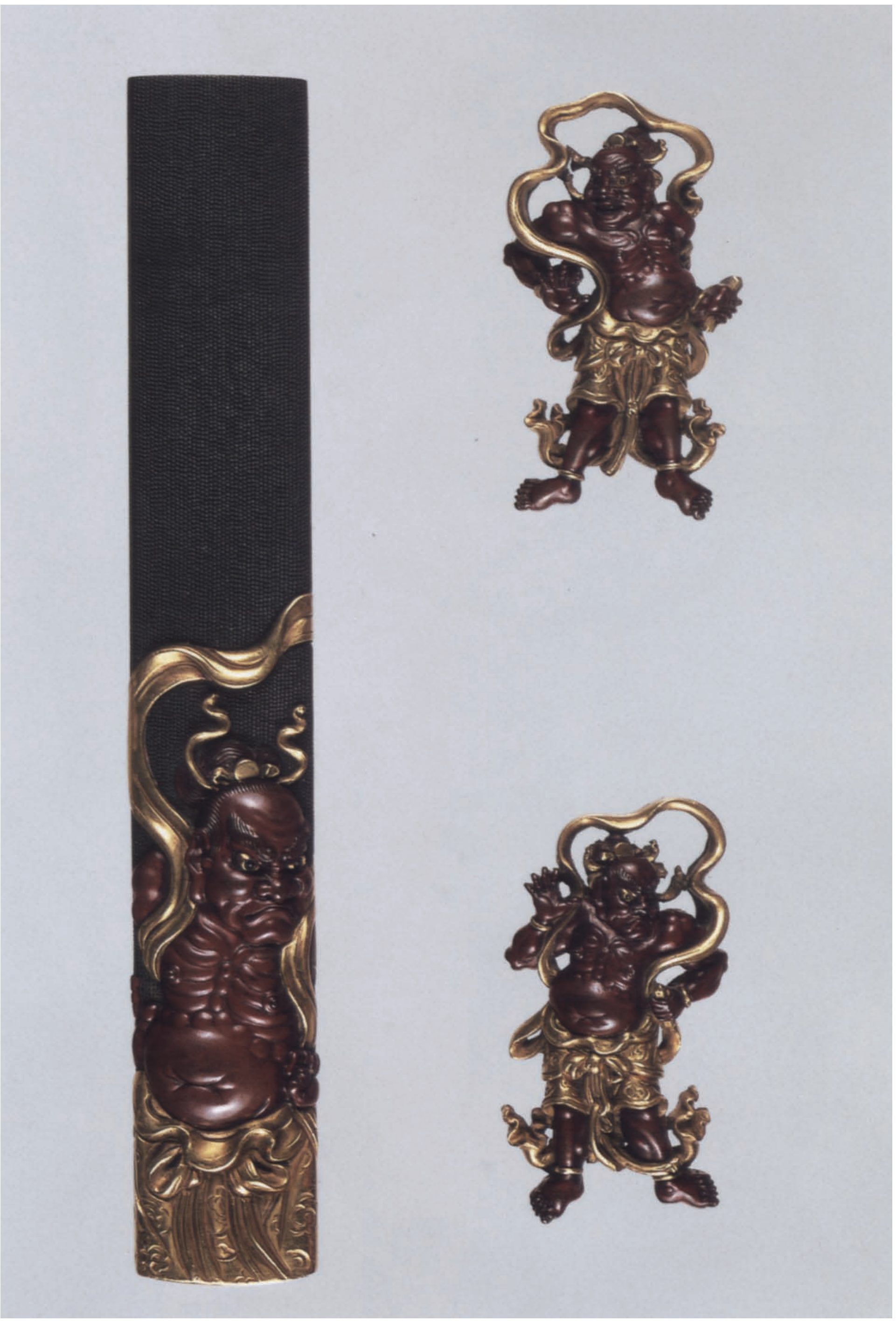


Yokoya Sōmin

## 158.

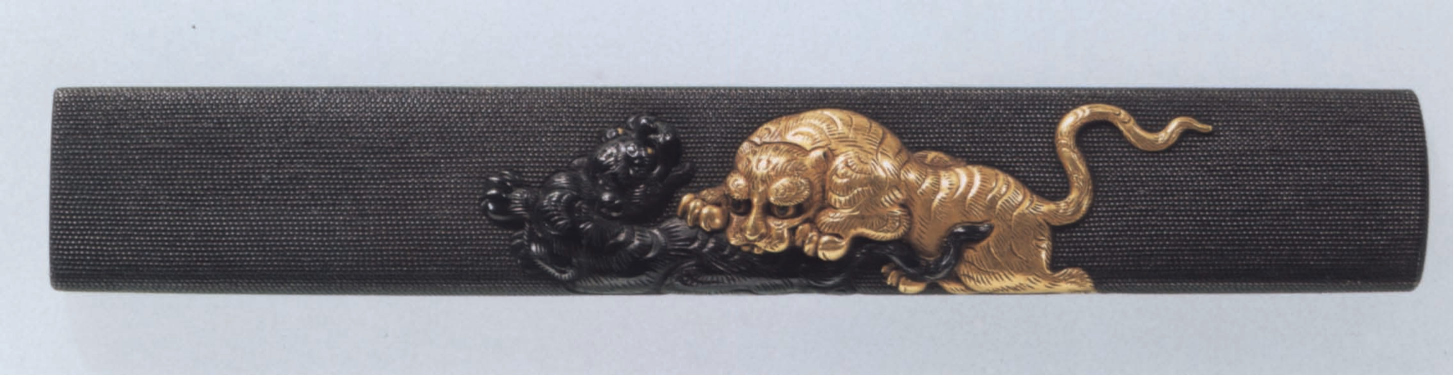
## Set of *menuki* (hilt fittings) and *kozuka* (utility knife handle) with *Ni-ō* (Buddhist guardian figures)

## 重要文化財 二王図二所物

Edo period, 18th century
*Shakudō*, copper, and gold
L. of *kozuka*, 9.9 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of each *menuki*, 3.5 cm (1⅜ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of *kozuka* and *menuki*:
宗珉（花押）SOMIN (*kaō*)
Kyoto National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

This matching set of fittings, known as *futatokoromono*, comprises a *kozuka*, the handle of a small utility knife, and a pair of *menuki*, decorative hilt fittings. They are embellished with Buddhist guardian figures called *Ni-ō*. The figure of the *Ni-ō* on the *kozuka* is made of colored metals carved in high relief and inlaid on a fine lacquer-like *shakudō nanako* ground. His torso, with its exaggerated musculature, is skillfully carved, and he has a forceful countenance. In stark contrast to the prominent decoration on the front, the entire back of the *kozuka* is simply covered in thin gold sheet (*itakin*) and is inscribed with the maker's signature and *kaō* (monogram). The *menuki* are made of copper carved in the round (*kata-bori*) and are decorated with *iro-e* as well as gold inlay. Although small, they brim with movement, succinctly conveying the strength and domineering presence of the *Ni-ō*.

The maker of the set, Yokoya Sōmin (1670–1733), initially worked in the style of the Gotō school of *ie-bori* artists, who enjoyed the privileges of working directly for the *bakufu* (military government). He later assumed a more "painterly" style in his metalwork under the influence of the Kanō school of painting as well as Hanabusa Ichō (1652–1724), perfecting a precise, elaborate, and colorful manner. Sōmin was active during the flowering of the magnificent culture of the Genroku era (ca. 1680–1709) and was widely admired among the populace. From his Yokoya school emerged such groups as the Yanagawa and Omori, who were, in turn, powerful influences on later generations of fittings makers. Indeed, from Sōmin's time on, the Yokoya school and other, related schools of metalworkers came to



be known as *machi-bori* ("town carvers")—meaning they were independent artists who made works for the open market—as opposed to the *ie-bori* ("house carvers") of the Gotō school, who worked only for the samurai clans. HK

Yokoya Sōmin

## 159.

## *Kozuka* (utility knife handle) with tigers

## 噛合虎図小柄

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Edo period, 18th century
*Shakudō* and gold
L. 9.8 cm (3⅞ in.)
Inscribed on reverse: 宗珉（花押）*SOMIN* (*kaō*)
Tokyo National Museum

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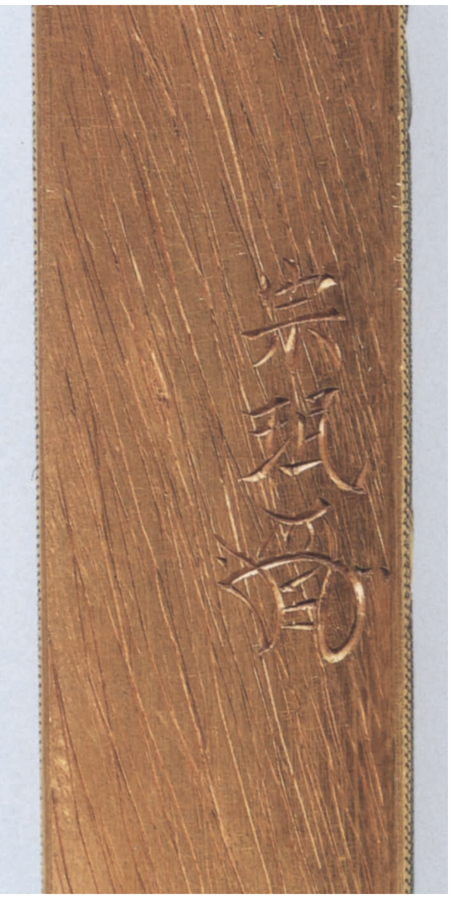
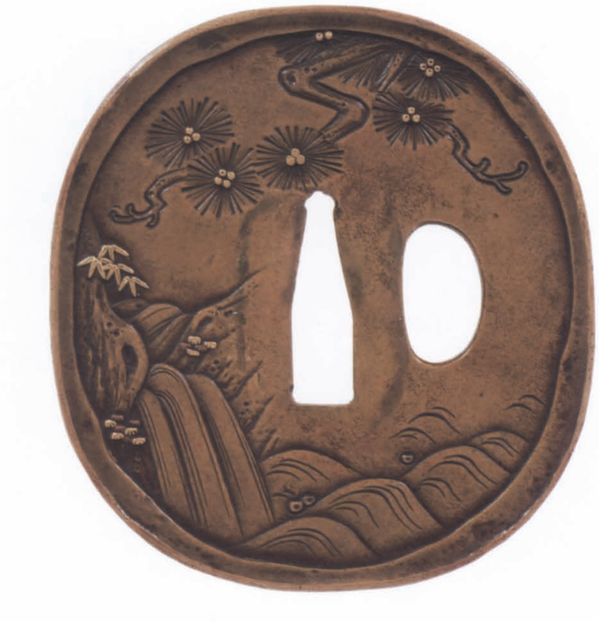
The two tigers are depicted against a *shakudō nanako* ground. The one shown ferociously biting the other on the back is inlaid in gold *iro-e*, while the other is made of *shakudō*—an alloy that patinates to a dark bluish black—with its spots detailed in gold inlay. The realistic feline movement and facial expressions of the beasts are skillfully rendered considering the small format. The tiger being bitten twists around in an attempt to face his opponent, but the attacker holds him down firmly with both forepaws, so as not to be shaken off.

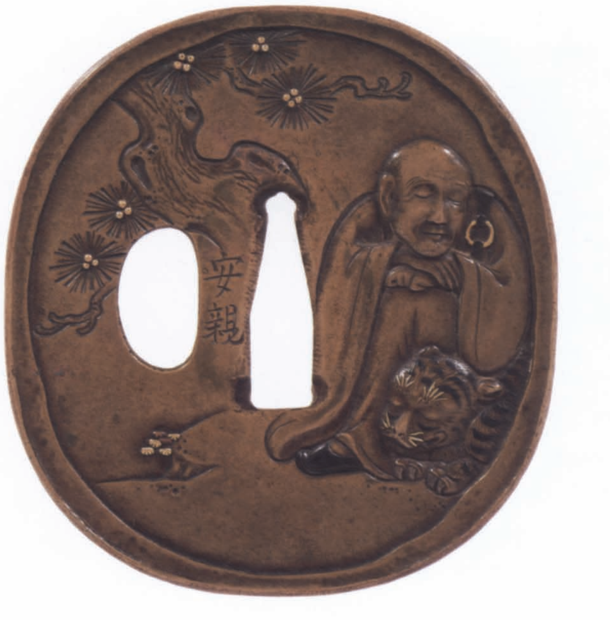
The maker, Yokoya Sōmin, was originally a retainer of the Tokugawa shogun. He eventually resigned his position in order to make fittings using more freely inspired materials and techniques (see cat. no. 158). Sōmin nurtured many pupils, including the artists who formed the Yanagawa, Ōmori, and Furukawa schools as well as the Ishiguro and Kikuoka, which emerged from the Yanagawa school. Collectively these various schools, together with the Nara school, were the two largest groups of sword-fittings makers in Edo . HK



Detail of reverse, showing inscription



Reverse



Obverse

Tsuchiya Yasuchika

**160.**

### *Tsuba* (sword guard) with the Zen monk Bukan

### 重要文化財 豊干禅師図鍔

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Edo period, 17th century
Brass
7.8 × 7.2 cm (3⅛ × 2⅞ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 安親 *YASUCHIKA*
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures,
Hyōgo Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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The obverse of this oval brass *tsuba* depicts a sleeping monk and a tiger beneath a pine tree; on the reverse is a waterfall carved in relief. Although the carving is shallow, perspective and three-dimensionality are achieved through subtle variations in depth. The monk is Bukan, of the Chinese Tang-dynasty Tendai sect, who was renowned as the teacher of the poets Kanzan and Jittoku. Bukan is said to have traveled on the back of a tiger he had tamed, the animal's ferocity having yielded to the monk's virtue. The artist who made the piece, Yasuchika, gave them both gentle countenances that contribute to the overall impression of a peaceful midday rest in springtime.

Yasuchika (1670–1744) was born in Shōnai (in present-day Yamagata Prefecture) and went to live in Edo, where he entered the school of Nara Tatsumasa. He worked in various metals, including iron, copper, and brass, using techniques such as *takaniku-bori* (high-relief sculpture), *katakiri-bori* (oblique "chisel-cut" engraving), *zōgan* (inlay), and *iro-e* (decoration using colored metals in a variety of techniques other than inlay). His depictions of people and landscapes are at once realistic and lyrical and avoid an excessive display of technique. Along with Nara Toshinaga and Sugiura Jōi, also of the Nara group, he was highly esteemed during his lifetime as one of the Nara *Sansaku* (Three Great Masters of Nara). This masterpiece is representative of his work. HK

Sugiura Jōi

## 161.

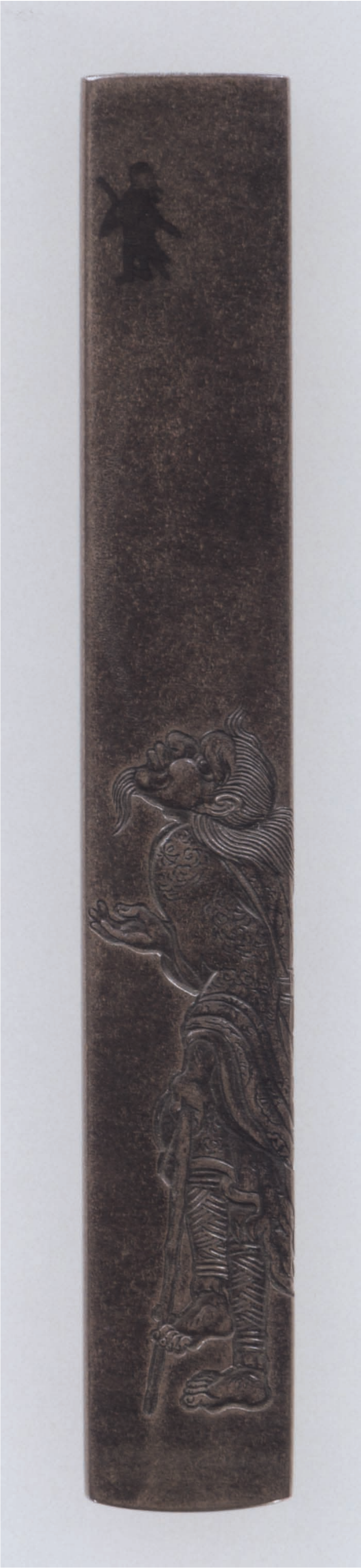
## *Kozuka* (utility knife handle) with the mountain hermit Tekkai

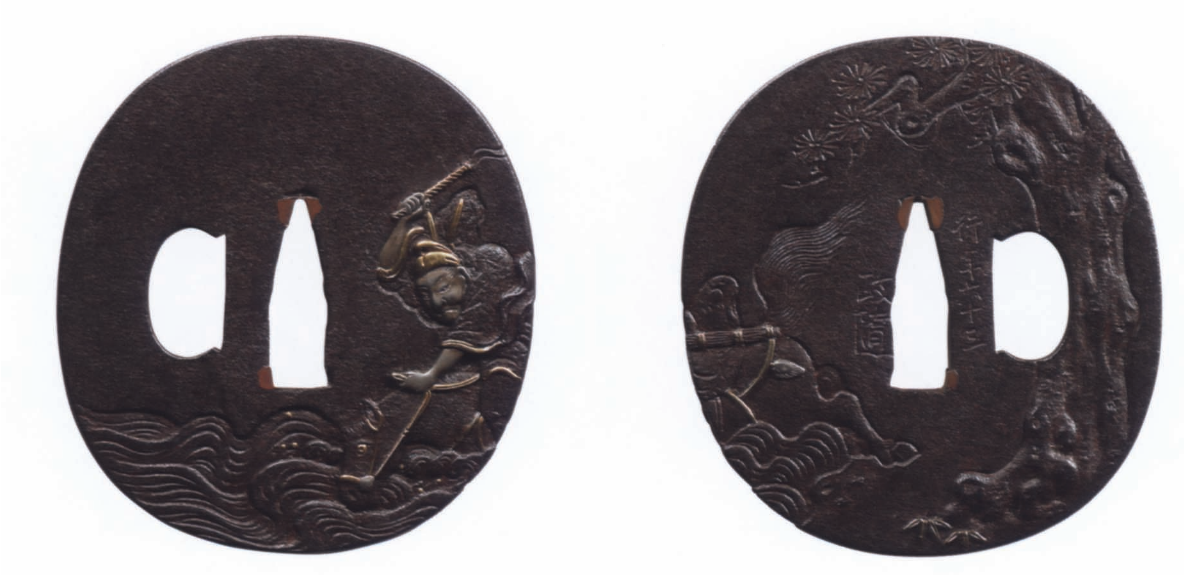
## 重要美術品 鉄拐仙人図小柄

Edo period, 18th century
*Shibuichi* and *shakudō*
L. 9.7 cm (3⅞ in.)
Inlaid in gold on reverse: 乗意（金印）*JOI* (seal)
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures,
Hyōgo Prefecture
**Important Art Object**

Sugiura Jōi (1731–1761), born as a samurai of the Toda clan of Shinshū province (present-day Nagano Prefecture), went to Edo to study under the fittings maker Nara Toshinaga. He flourished there and was eventually famed along with Toshinaga and Yasuchika (see cat. no. 160) as one of the Nara *Sansaku* (Three Great Masters of Nara). He is renowned for devising the sculptural technique known as *shishiai-bori*, in which the design and ground occupy the same plane. This is achieved by chiseling away some of the ground metal surrounding a motif in order to produce a three-dimensional "outline" effect.

This *kozuka*, the handle of a utility knife fitted into the side of a scabbard, is among Jōi's greatest masterpieces, exemplifying his unsurpassed skill in the *shishiai-bori* technique. It depicts Tekkai, one of the *sennin*—mountain hermits believed to be endowed with supernatural abilities—who is said to have lived in China during the Sui dynasty (581–618). According to legend, Tekkai could transport his spirit away from his body. On one occasion he found himself unable to return it, however, and his spirit instead entered the corpse of a beggar. Along with the legend of Gama, another *sennin*, the fable was a popular subject of Chinese Sui-dynasty paintings. Here Tekkai's figure is chiseled in a ground of *shibuichi* (an alloy of silver and copper), while his spiritual self, transported in an exhalation of breath, is depicted in fine engraving and *shakudō* inlay. IT





Reverse

Obverse

Shozui (Masayuki)

### 162.

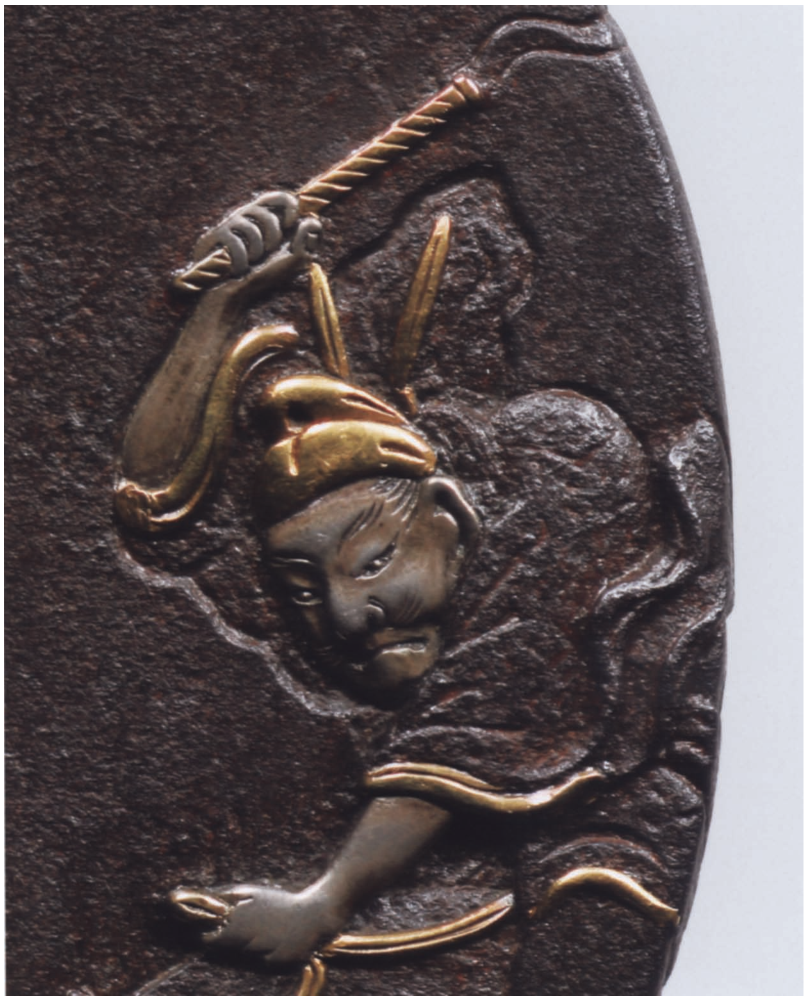
## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with the Dankei Episode

## 壇渓図鍔

Edo period,18th century
Iron, gold, and silver
6.9 × 6.4 cm (2¾ × 2½ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 政髄行年六十三 *SHOZUI GYONEN ROKUJUSAN*
Private collection

This *tsuba*, which was made for a *wakizashi*, is unusual in that the principal part of the design—the scene with the horse and rider—is on the reverse and then continues over the rim, at right, onto the front. It depicts a famous episode in the Chinese *Tale of the Three Kingdoms* in which Liu Bei (Japanese: Ryubi Gentoku), later the king of Shu (Japanese: Shoku), escapes from an enemy by plunging into a raging river at a place known as Tan Xi (Japanese: Dankei), where crossing was said to be impossible. He is shown here striking out for the far bank, entrusting his fate to heaven. As he whips his famous horse, Dilu (Japanese: Tekiro), the sinews of his arms are stretched taut, pulling the reins and brandishing the whip, and his clothes flutter in the wind. Many of the details are so realistic that it seems as if the piece were made of some material other than iron, including the acornlike eyes of the horse, which have a wide-eyed gleam reflecting the life-or-death struggle, the pine needles on the reverse, and the intricate lines of the horse's tail.

The surface finish of this round but somewhat angular *tsuba* is slightly rough. The sculpture of the horse, rider, and pine was done in a technique known as *shishiai-bori*, in which the design and the ground surface occupy the same plane. The rider's face and hands and the horse's bit are embellished with silver inlay; gold



inlay was used for the lower part of the rider's clothing and sleeves, his cap, the reins, the handle of the whip, the horse's eye, the flying spray, and, on the obverse, the bamboo grass at the base of the pine trunk. Sections of the turbulent water, the horse's tail, and the pine needles were executed in *katakiri-bori* and *kebori*.

The maker, Shozui (also known as Masayuki), was born in the ninth year of the Genroku era (1696) and studied with both of the great schools of *machi-bori* artists that flourished in Edo in the middle Edo period: the Yokoya school and the Nara school, under its master, the great maker Toshinaga. He later established the Hamano school and nurtured many pupils, including Kaneyuki and Noriyuki. Shozui used many "art names," or sobriquets, such as Miboku and Otsuryuken, and the dynamism of his strikingly original works remained undiminished as he grew older. At sixty-one he began inscribing his works with his age, as seen on this example, and he continued doing so until he was seventy-three. Shozui died in the sixth year of the Meiwa era (1769), at the age of seventy-four.

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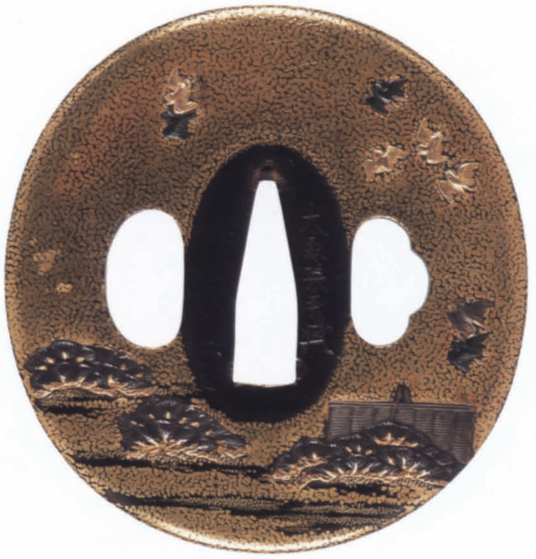
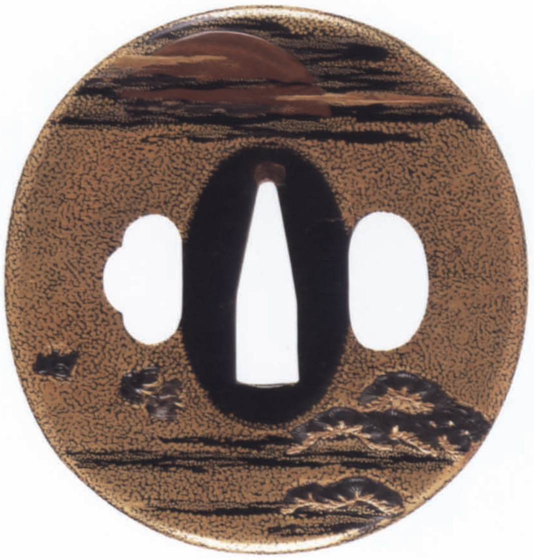


Obverse



Reverse

## Ōmori Teruhide

### 163.

### *Tsuba* (sword guard) with pine boughs, a sailboat, and plovers

### 松帆千鳥図鐔

Edo period, 17th century
*Shakudō*, gold, and copper
7.2 × 6.5 cm (2⅞ × 2½ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 大森英秀（花押）
ŌMORI TERUHIDE (*kaō*)
Hikone Castle Museum, Shiga Prefecture

The *omote* (obverse) of this *tsuba* shows a sailboat passing behind a pine bough, with plovers flying overhead. The *ura* (reverse) also depicts pine boughs and plovers as well as the sun setting over the sea. The scenes evoke the *waka* poem "Matsuho no Ura" (The Bay at Matsuho); the place-name "Matsuho" means "pine and sails." The maker, Teruhide (1730–1798), was a second-generation artist of the Ōmori school, in the Yokoya line. He was the innovator of a technique in which coarse gold particles are inlaid individually to produce a ground resembling *nashiji* lacquer, used to superb effect here. The *tsuba* was a beloved possession of Naoaki, the twelfth generation of the Ii family, who commissioned it from the artist.

MM

Iwamoto Konkan

## 164.

## *Daishō* pair of *fuchigashira* (pommel cap and collar) with carp among water weeds

## 鯉に藻図大小縁頭

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Edo period, 18th century
*Shibuichi* and gold
L. 3.4 cm (1⅜ in.); W. 1.6 cm (⅝ in.)
Inscribed on bottom of *fuchi*: 岩本昆寛（花押）
*IWAMOTO KONKAN* (*kaō*)
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures,
Hyōgo Prefecture

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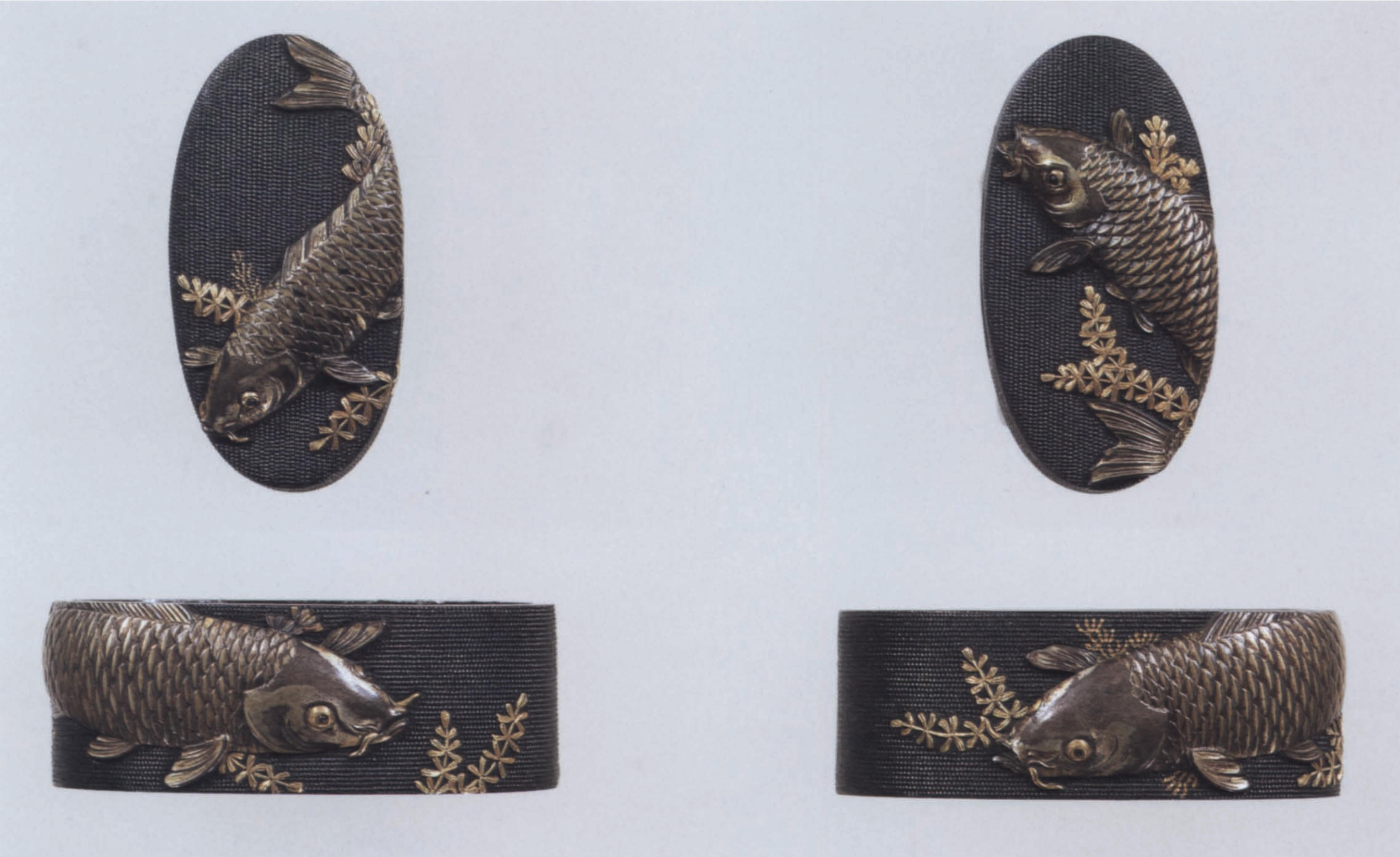
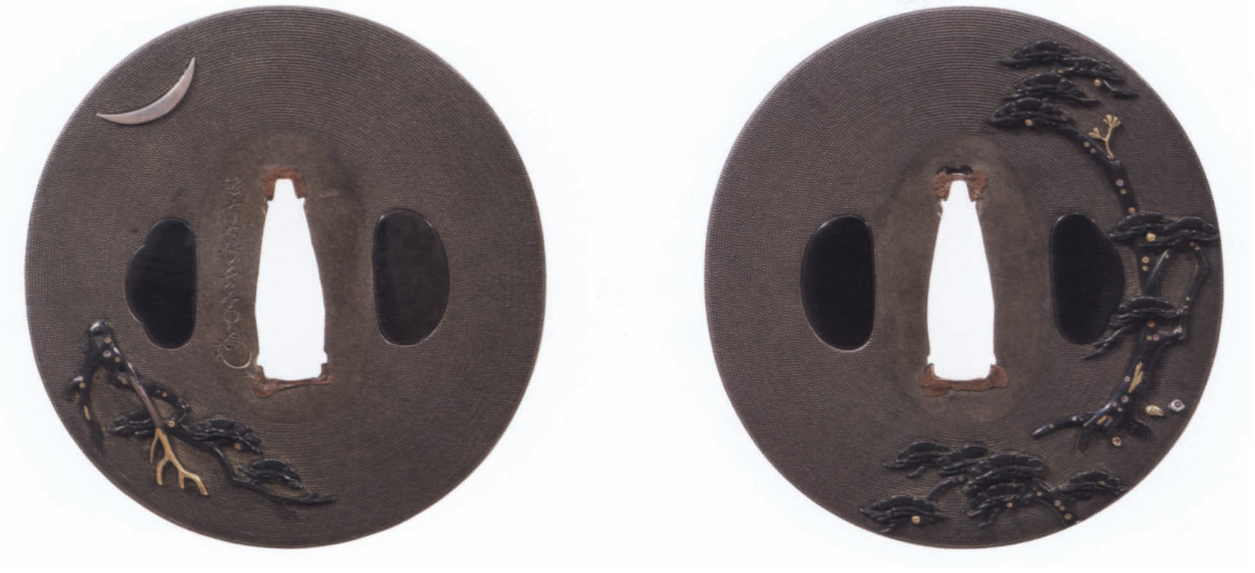
Konkan (1744–1801), a sixth-generation fittings maker of the Iwamoto school (which had followed the Yokoya school in Edo), earned widespread acclaim for his free, expressive style. Most of his works are sets of *fuchigashira*, a term that refers to a matching pair of sword fittings comprising a collar (*fuchi*), which strengthens the hilt at its base, and a pommel cap (*kashira*), which fits over the top of the hilt. These were typically embellished with illustrations from Japanese and Chinese fables. He also made other fittings, however, including *tsuba* and *mitokoromono* sets, and specialized in realistic designs incorporating fish, shellfish, and bird and flower motifs as well as human figures.

This set of *fuchigashira*, made for a *daishō* pair of sword mountings, is decorated with carp swimming among water weeds. The weeds are done in gold *iro-e*, while the carp are made of *shibuichi* (an alloy of copper and silver), with the scales and sinews of the fins delicately expressed in rubbed gold. The set is a wonderful example of Konkan's justly admired realism, which perfectly captures the flexibility and quick movements of the carp. IT





Reverse

Obverse

Echizen Daijō Nagatsune

### 165.

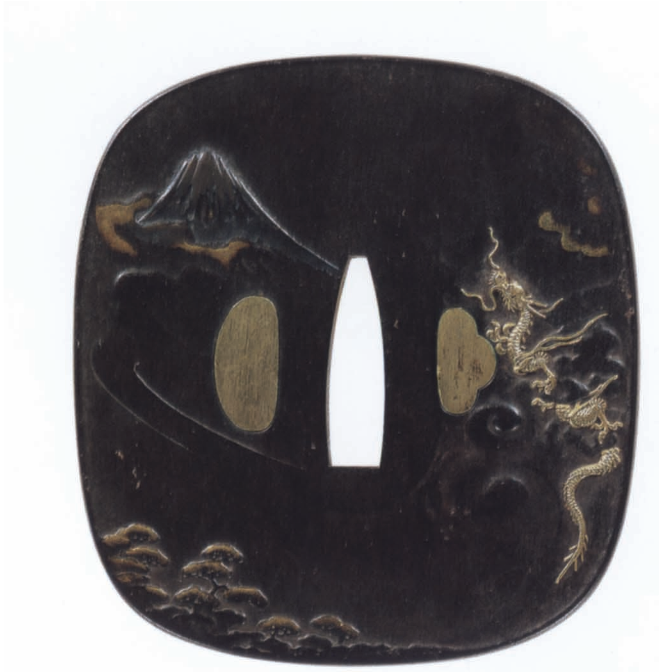
## *Tsuba* (sword guard) with a pine branch on a beach beneath a crescent moon

## 浜松に三日月図鐔

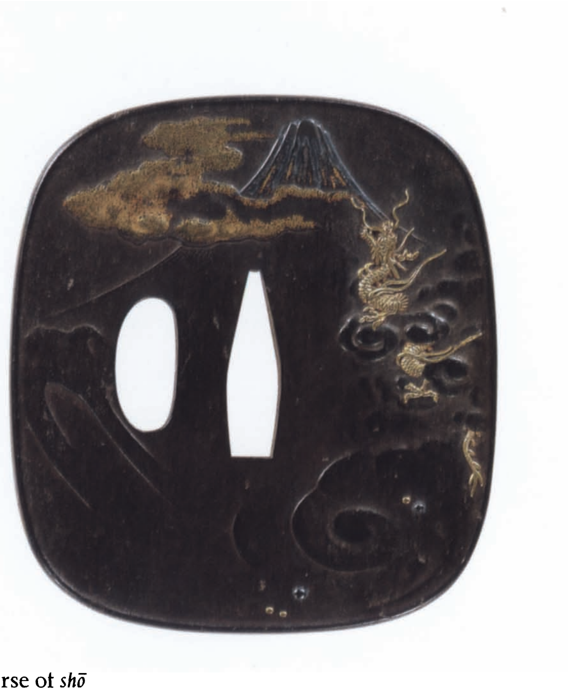
Edo period, 18th century
*Shibuichi*, gold, silver, and *shakudō*
7.2 × 6.9 cm (2⅞ × 2¾ in.)
Inscribed on obverse: 越前大掾長常 ECHIZEN DAIJO NAGATSUNE (*kaō*)
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture

This broad, somewhat elliptical *tsuba* is made of *shibuichi*, an alloy of copper and silver, and has a *nanako* (punched-dot) ground. The *omote* (obverse) and *ura* (reverse) are both embellished in *takabori-iro-e zōgan* (high-relief applied inlay) with a motif of a pine branch on a beach; that on the reverse sits beneath a crescent moon. The pleasing combination of the large and small pine boughs, the plain background, and the moon floating in space admirably conveys the atmosphere of a lonely moonlit night.

The maker, Ichinomiya Nagatsune (1721–1786)—"Echizen Daijō" is an honorary title conferred by the court—was born in the sixth year of the Kyōhō era in Tsuruga, in Echizen province (present-day Fukui Prefecture). He left home at a young age and went to Kyōto to study metal sculpture in the school of Yasui Takanaga. He also studied painting under Ishida Yutei and Yamazaki Jounsai and eventually became a skilled artist whose genius is most apparent in the pictorial compositions of his works. He often turned to traditional Chinese fables and bird and flower motifs for subject matter, deftly employing a combination of the metalworking techniques *takabori iro-e* and *hira-zōgan* (flat inlay) with *katakiri-bori* (V-shaped chiseling). IT



Obverse of *dai*



Obverse of *shō*

Ōtsuki Mitsuoki

### 166.

## *Daishō* pair of *tsuba* (sword guards) with dragons passing Mount Fuji

## 富士越龍図鐔　大小鍔

---

Edo period, 19th century
Iron, gold, and silver
*Dai*, 8 × 7.4 cm (3⅛ × 2⅞ in.); *shō*, 7 × 6.4 cm (2¾ × 2½ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of each: 大龍斎　月光興 *TAIRYUSAI TSUKI MITSUOKI*
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture

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The motif of the ascending dragon, symbolizing a surging vitality, was a popular theme of Edo-period metalwork. The version seen here, in which the dragon is shown flying through otherworldly clouds drifting around Mount Fuji, was regarded as especially auspicious. This superb *daishō* pair of *tsuba* presents the motif with integrity and relative simplicity in high relief on an iron ground.

The maker, Ōtsuki Mitsuoki (1766–1834), was born in Kyōto in the third year of the Meiwa era. He was the son of Mitsuyoshi, a fittings maker of the Ōtsuki school, and studied painting under Ganku (1756–1838). The influence of the Maruyama school as well as that of Nagasawa Rosetsu (1755–1799) and other painters active in Kyōto is conspicuous in his work, with its vivid depictions of their characteristic subjects and compositions. Mitsuoki went on to become known as the greatest Kyōto metal artist after Ichinomiya Nagatsune (see cat. no. 165). He worked in a wide range of materials, including iron, *shibuichi*, *shakudō*, and copper. In his compositions, which grew increasingly realistic, he combined decorative techniques—including *takabori iro-e*, *katakiri-bori*, *usuniku-bori*, and *hira-zōgan*—to create fashionable, atmospheric depictions of birds, flowers, and people as well as the customs of Kyōto.

IT

Gotō Ichijō

### 167.

## *Daishō* pair of *tsuba* (sword guards) with grasses, flowers, and insects

## 草花虫図大小鐔

---

Edo period, 1857
*Shakudō*, gold, and silver
*Dai*, 8 × 7.5 cm (3⅛ × 3 in.); *shō*, 7.5 × 7 cm (3 × 2¾ in.)
Inscribed: 後藤法橋一乗（花押） *GOTŌ HOKKYŌ ICHIJŌ* (*kaō*)
Tokyo National Museum

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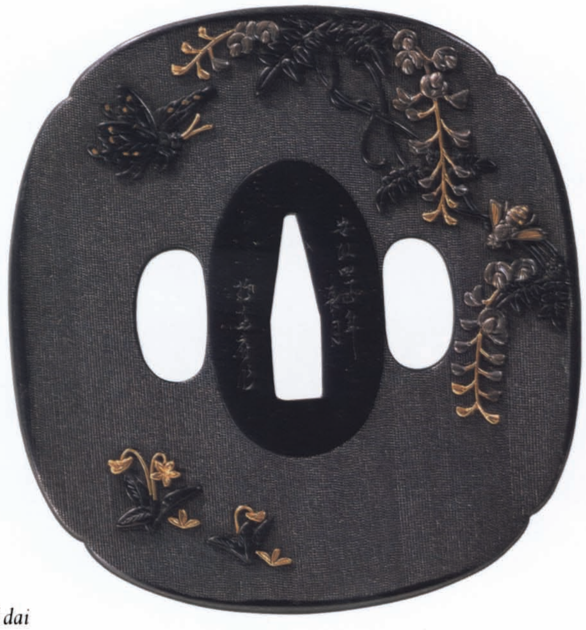
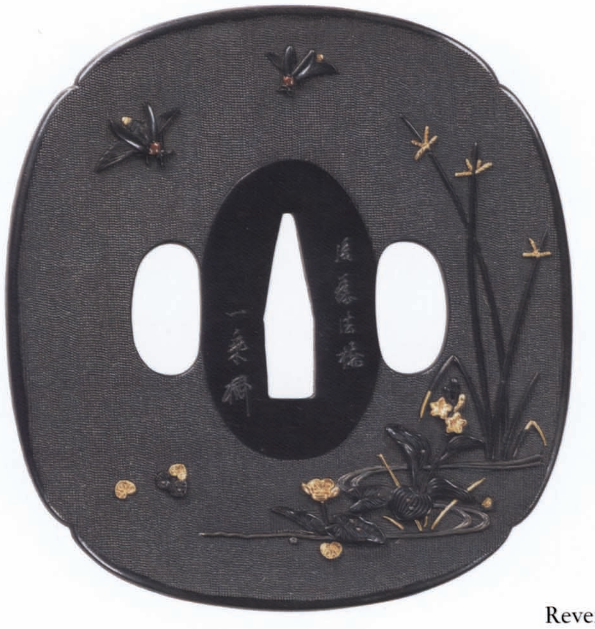
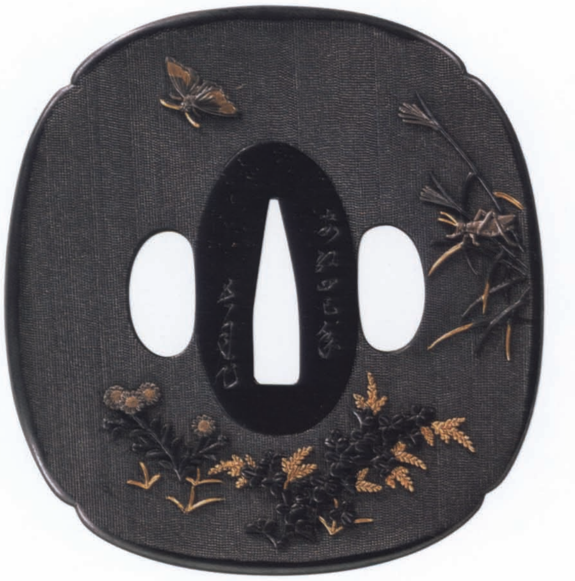
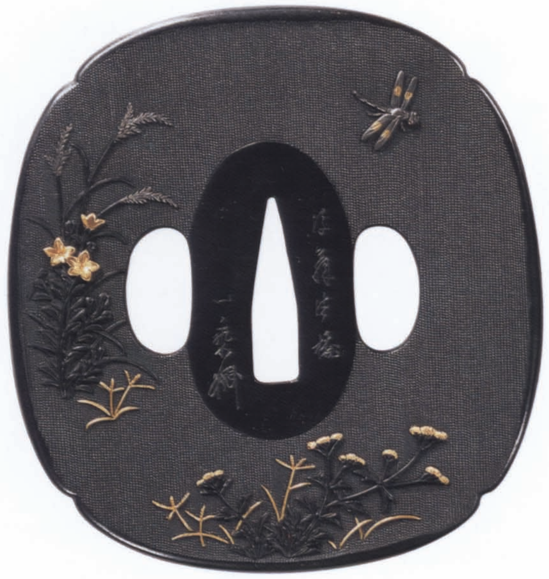
Both of the *tsuba* in this set, which was made for a *daishō*, or matching pair of long and short sword mountings, have subtle notches at the corners that form a somewhat quatrefoil shape known as *mokkō*. The ground material is good-quality *shakudō*, an alloy unique to Japan that patinates to a dark bluish black, and the surface texture is a fine, well-ordered *nanako* (punched-dot pattern).

On the obverse of the larger of the two *tsuba* (the *dai*) are young wisteria blossoms; violets are depicted at bottom. Among the blossoms are a butterfly and a bee executed in gold, silver, and *shakudō iro-e*. The smaller *tsuba* (the *shō*) depicts autumnal foliage, including chrysanthemum, bush


Obverse of *dai*


Reverse of *dai*

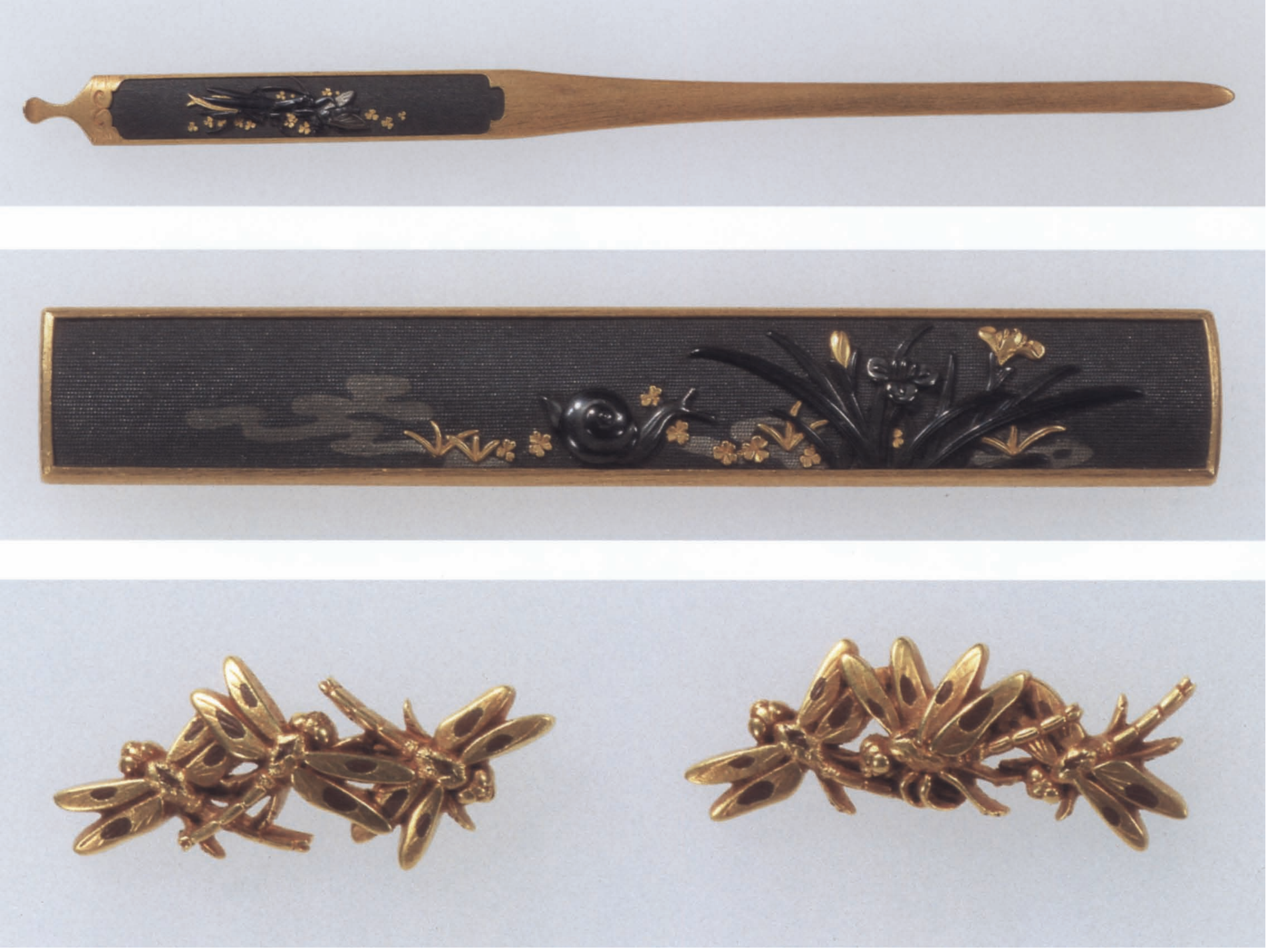

Obverse of *shō*


Reverse of *shō*

clover, and pampas grass, and on the obverse are a butterfly and grasshopper inlaid using the same techniques as on the other *tsuba*. Together the two evoke the traditional genre of bird and flower paintings known as *kachō-ga*.

The maker of the set, Gotō Ichijō (1791–1876), was born in Kyōto into a branch of the Gotō clan. Highly esteemed as the last great fittings maker of the Gotō family, he is also notable for having introduced realism to the somewhat tradition-bound Gotō style. He made numerous *tsuba*, which as a rule were not made by the Gotō family, and was a dedicated teacher as well. Among his pupils were many famous makers, including Funada Ikkin, Hashimoto Isshi, Fukui Kazutoshi, Wada Isshin, Nakagawa Issho, and Araki Tomei (see cat. no. 169), whose cigarette boxes, metal fittings, and various other decorative personal accessories made during the Meiji era helped introduce Western audiences to the great skill and sophistication of Japanese ornamental metalwork.

HK



Gotō Ichijō

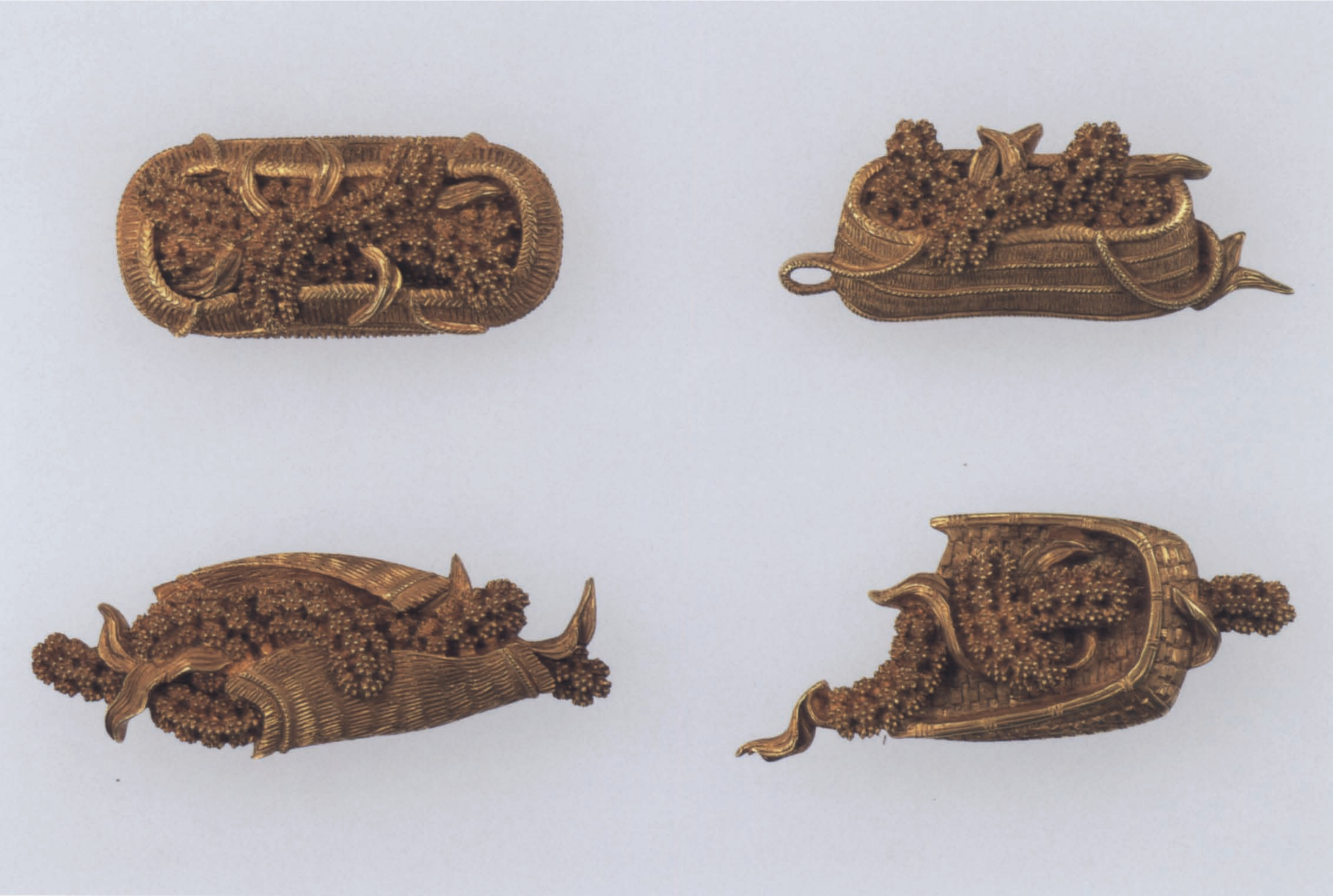
### 168.

## *Mitokoromono* (set of sword fittings) with grasses, flowers, and insects

## 草花虫図三所物

Edo period, 1858
*Shakudō*, gold, and silver
L. of *kozuka*, 9.7 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *kōgai*, 21.3 cm (8⅜ in.); W. of each *menuki*, 3.1 cm (1¼ in.)
Inscribed: 後藤法橋一乗（花押） *GOTŌ HOKKYŌ ICHIJŌ* (*kaō*)
Tokyo National Museum

This *mitokoromono* (a set of matching *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and *menuki*) was made by Gotō Ichijō in 1858, the year after he made the *daishō* pair of *tsuba* with similar subject matter (cat. no. 167). The present set was commissioned by the Shirase family, who were wealthy landowners in Shibata (present-day Shibata City, in Niigata Prefecture) and merchants in the service of the Shibata *han* (domain). It is typical of Ichijō's style and, as a special commission, reflects an appropriately superior level of craftmanship. The *kozuka* (utility knife handle) and *kōgai* (hairdressing tool) both have a *shakudō* base clad in thin gold sheet; flowers, including irises and violets, caterpillers, and butterflies are inlaid in high relief. The *menuki* (hilt fittings) are made of gold and depict trios of dragonflies. Although only three metals were employed to make the set—gold, silver, and *shakudō*, an alloy that patinates to a dark bluish black—the colors realistically evoke in minute detail the countryside in spring and summer. Another *mitokoromono* made at the same time and using the same techniques has a *kozuka* and *kōgai* embellished with summer grasses and insects and *menuki* in the shape of butterflies. HK



Araki Tōmei

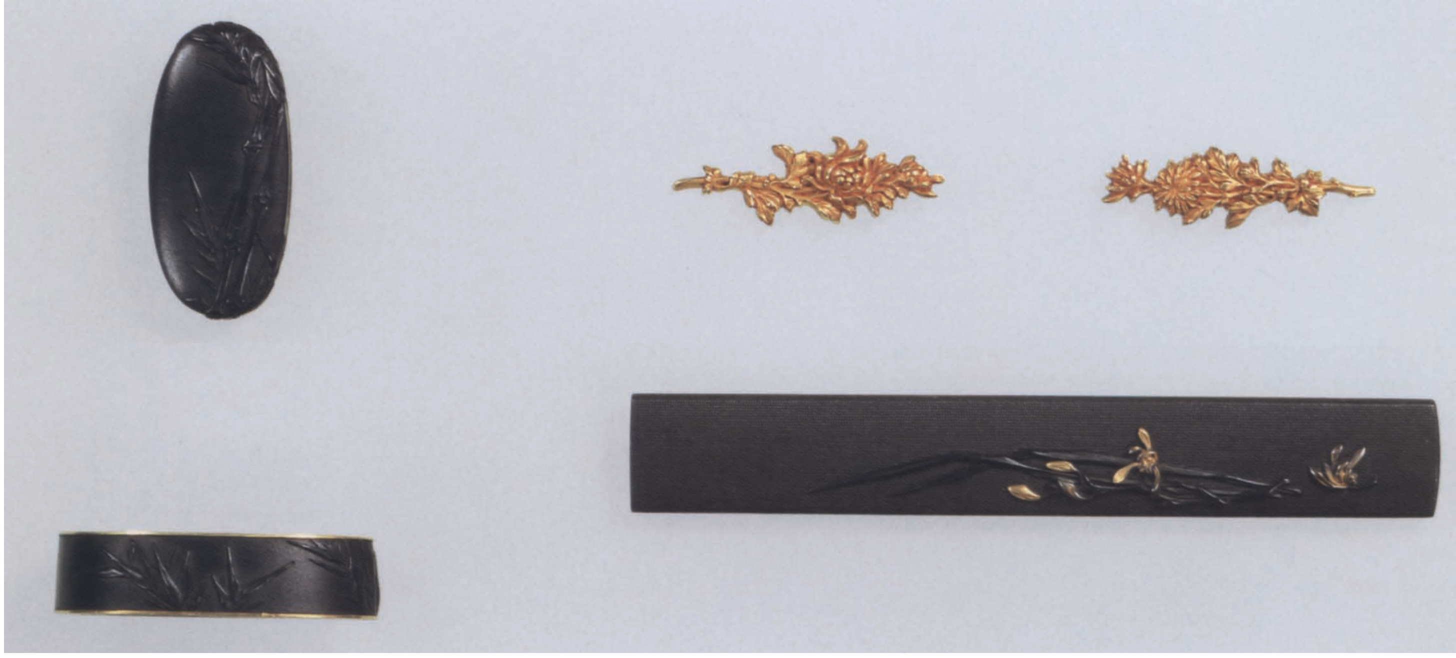
### 169.

### *Daishō* set of *menuki* (hilt fittings) with brimming baskets of millet

### 籠盛粟穂図大小目貫

Edo period, 19th century
Gold
L. of *dai* pair, 3 cm (1⅛ in.) each; L. of *shō* pair, 3.5 cm (1⅜ in.) each
Inscribed on reverse of each: 一斎東明藤秀信（花押）
*ISSAI TOMEI FUJI HIDENOBU* (*kaō*)
Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures,
Hyōgo Prefecture

Araki Tōmei (1817–1870) studied first in the studio of Gotō Tōjō and then under Gotō Ichijō (see cat. nos. 167, 168). He also became close to the painter Hayashi Ranga, under whom he studied drawing. He is most famous for his unique skill at depicting millet, as seen in this *daishō* set of *menuki*. The four pieces—representing two carrying baskets, one winnowing basket, and one traditional straw cloak (the winnowing basket and straw cloak are both known in Japanese as *mino*)—all overflow with ears of millet made of pure gold. The basketwork is carefully delineated, and the individual grains on the clusters of millet are minutely sculpted in *taka-bori* (high relief) using a special chisel. The set is hailed as Tomei's masterpiece for its rich realism, which is beautifully enhanced by the color of the gold. IT



Kanō Natsuō

## 170.

## Set of sword fittings with *Shikunshi* (Four Noble Flowers)

## 四君子図揃金具

---

Edo period, 1861
Iron, gold, silver, and *shakudō*
*Tsuba*, 7.4 × 6.6 cm (2⅞ × 2⅝ in.); L. of *kozuka*, 9.7 cm (3⅞ in.); L. of *fuchi*, 3.7 cm (1½ in.); L. of *kashira*, 3.2 cm (1¼ in.); W. of each *menuki*, 3 cm (1⅛ in.)
Inscribed on reverse of *tsuba*: 鐔.夏雄 *TSUBA. NATSUŌ*; inscribed on reverse of *kozuka*: 小柄. 夏雄作 *KOZUKA.NATSUŌ SAKU*
Tokyo National Museum

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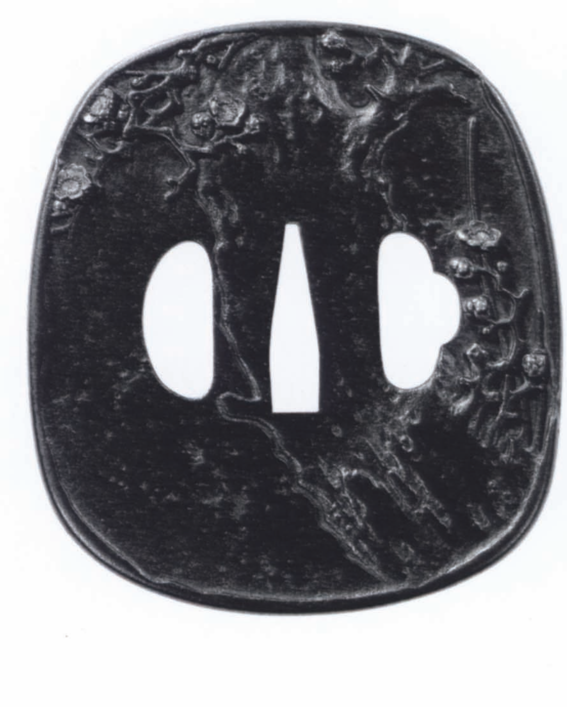
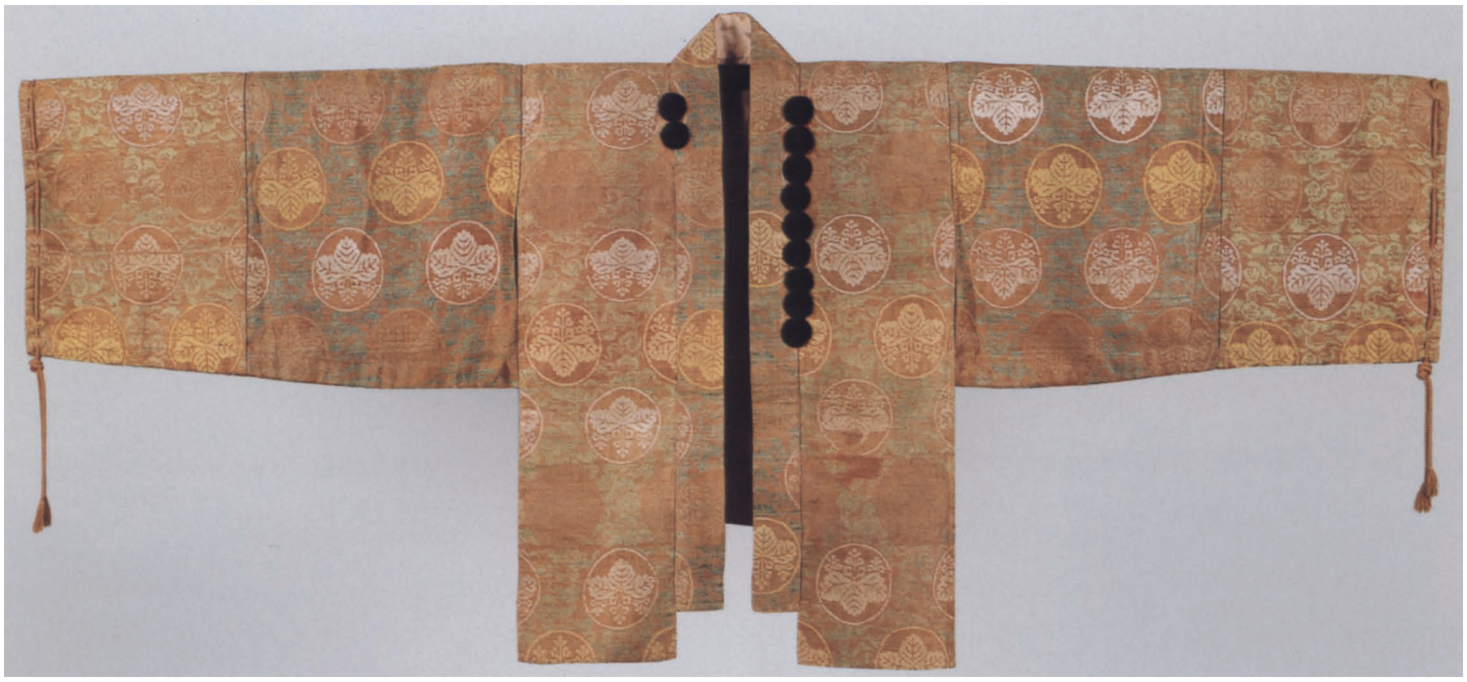
An old plum tree decorates the obverse of the *tsuba* (sword guard), while on the reverse are newly opened plum blossoms depicted in high-relief silver and gold inlay. The ***kozuka*** (utility knife handle), which is made of ***shakudō*** with a ***nanako*** (punched-dot) ground, has orchids inlaid in high relief; thin gold sheet is inlaid over the blossoms. The *fuchi* (pommel cap) and ***kashira*** (collar) also have a ***shakudō*** ground, with bamboo depicted in ***usuniku-bori***, in which the motifs are only slightly raised above the ground surface. The ***menuki*** are in the shape of gold chrysanthemum sprigs.

The plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo, all highly esteemed plants in East Asian culture, are known collectively in Japanese as the ***Shikunshi*** (Four Noble Flowers) and appear frequently as motifs on works of art. (The Chinese term for the subject is often translated as the "Four Virtuous Gentlemen.") The maker of this set, Kanō Natsuō (1828–1898), migrated from Kyōto to Edo, where he became the most renowned metalworker of the late Edo period. After the *Haitō Rei* edict of 1876—which essentially abolished the right to carry weapons in public for everyone except members of the military and police—he undertook the manufacture of patterns for the new Meiji government coinage and was one of the first lecturers in the newly created Tokyo School of Art (now Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music). His poetic designs made skillful use of the small spaces available on sword fittings, in contrast to the more decorative work of Gotō Ichijō, who was active about the same time. From the style of the signature on the ***kozuka***, this set of fittings can be dated to 1861.

**HK**



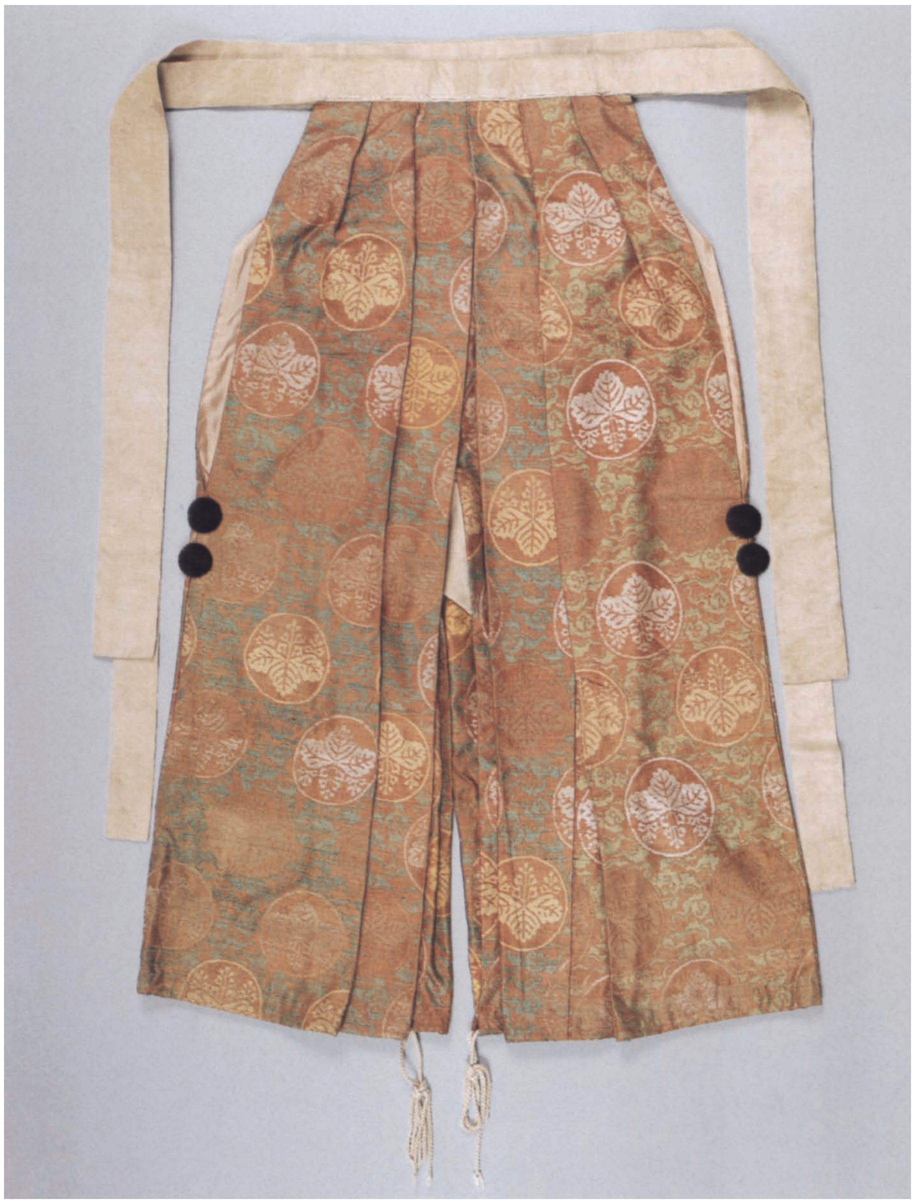


**171.**

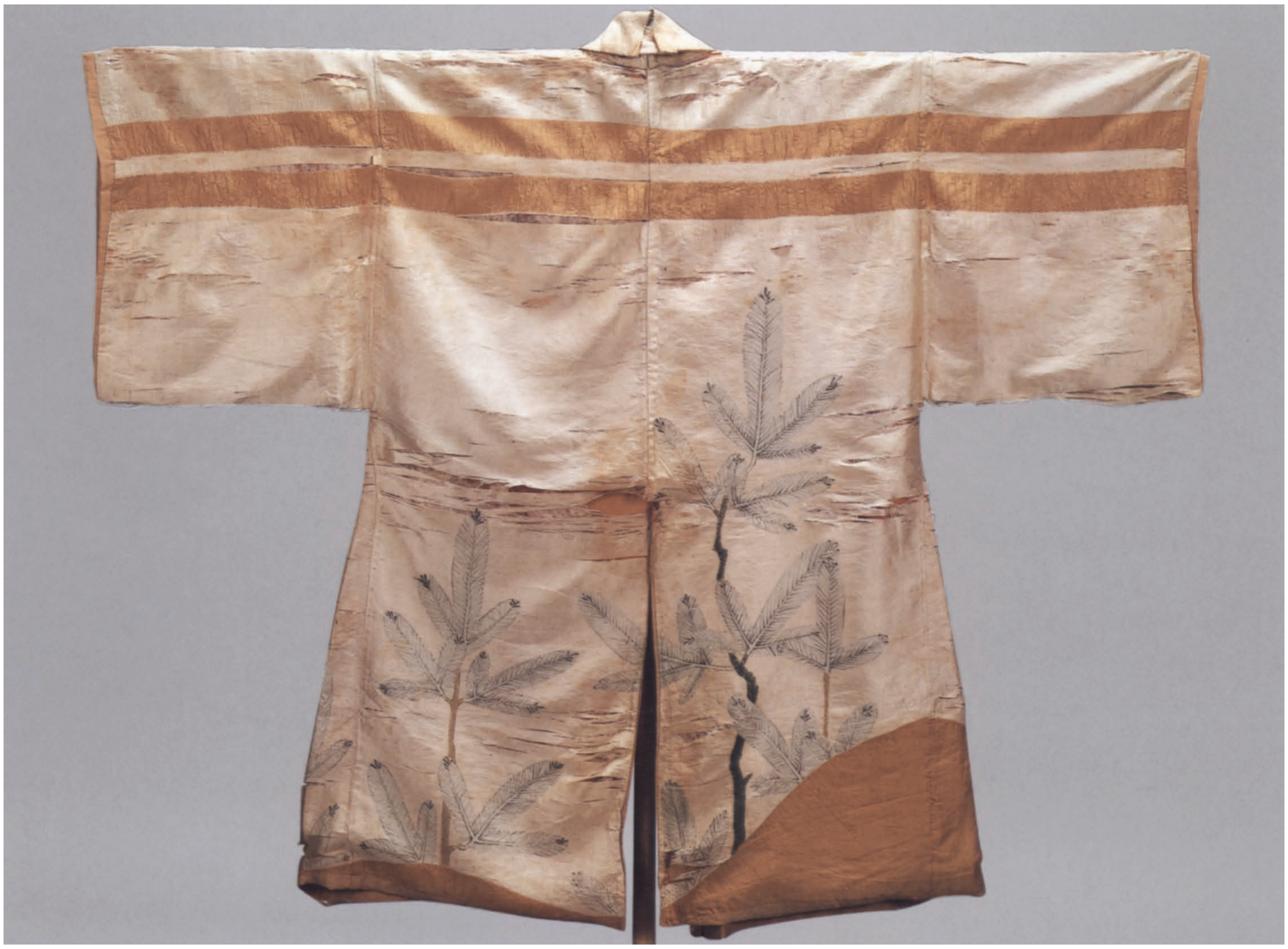
## Crimson *hitatare* (long jacket) and *hakama* (trousers) with scattered paulownia

## 重要文化財 紅地桐文 散錦直垂

Muromachi period, 16th century
Silk and brocade
*Hitatare*: L. 79 cm (31⅛ in.); W. of sleeve, 95 cm (37⅜ in.)
*Hakama*: L. 110 cm (43¼ in.); W. at hips, 95 cm (37⅜ in.)
Mohri Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**



This is a *yoroi hitatare*, a type of jacket made to be worn beneath an armor. Because such garments were intended for warriors facing death on the battlefield, fine silks and gold brocades were used, and there are more chrysanthemum ornaments—visible on both breasts—than on a typical *hitatare*. The outer surface is a brocade with paulownia designs in pale yellow and brown on a crimson ground; the lining is plain white silk. The sleeves are double width and taper slightly toward the cuffs, which are equipped with drawstrings. The sides are not sewn, and the armpits, accordingly, are open. The front of the jacket is long enough so that it can be tucked into the *hakama*, a traditional style of Japanese pleated trouser. The matching *hakama* is pleated to the waist, where there



Back

are plain white silk ties. The openings at the bottom of the legs are equipped with plain white tie cords.

Records kept by the Mōri family indicate that this *hitatare* was given to Mōri Motonari (1497–1571) by Yoshiteru, the thirteenth Ashikaga shogun (r. 1545–65). It is illustrated in the *Shūko Jisshu*, a book of ancient treasures published in the twelfth year of the Kansei era (1800). KS

### 172.

## *Dōfuku* (surcoat) with *tsujigahana*-dyed young pine trees

重要文化財
白地若松模様辻が花染胴服

---

Momoyama period, 16th century
Silk (*nerinuki* weaving), cotton, and pigments
H. 115 cm (45¼ in.); W. 76 cm (29⅞ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

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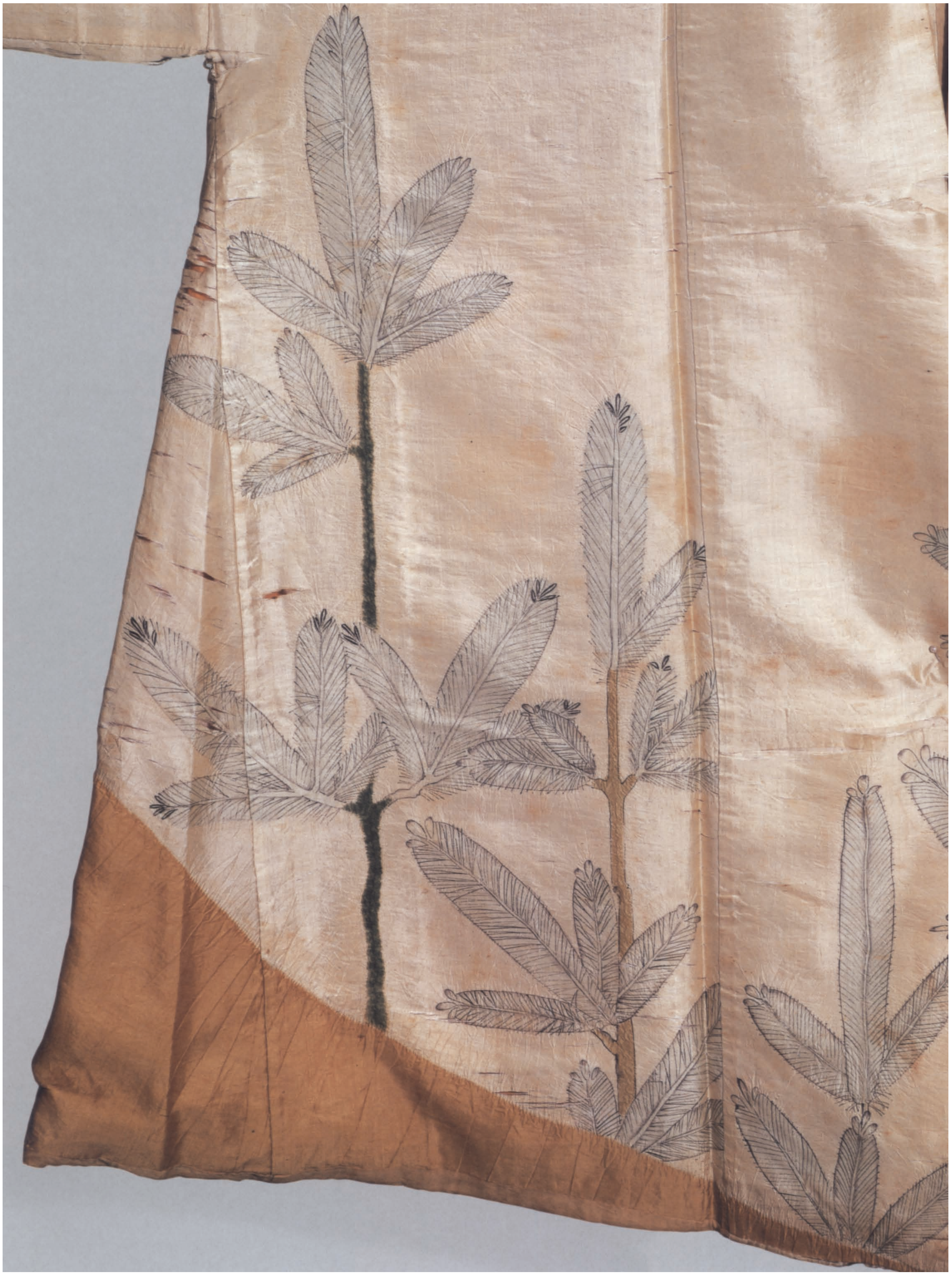
The *dōfuku*-type surcoat was a favorite among samurai beginning in the Sengoku-jidai, or Age of Wars (ca. 1467–1568), when it replaced the formal *hitatare*. Eventually such jackets came to be richly decorated and made of luxurious woven and dyed textiles, with competition arising in terms of their designs. From about the middle of the sixteenth century, the jackets generally had sleeves, although a type of sleeveless *dōfuku* was worn over armor in actual combat situations. It is believed that during the early Edo period this sleeveless type came to be known as a *jinbaori*, while a *dōfuku* with sleeves was called a *haori*, a term used to this day.

This *dōfuku* has a pictorial design formed by tie-dyeing (*shibori*) and painting on an overall white ground. The outer layer is made of *nerinuki* weaving—a method in which the warp and weft comprise refined and raw silk, respectively—in white and pale blue. The jacket is lined in red silk and padded with fine cotton. The back is expansive, and the sides have extra cloth to make the hem flare. The *futatsu-hiki*—the motif of two horizontal bars at the top—is depicted in red tie-dyeing, while the young pines growing from an earthen bank were



Detail of front

made using tie-dyeing as well as painting, a technique known as *tsujigahana* (see cat. no. 19).

According to the *Sanuki Meishō Zue*—a type of gazetteer of Sanuki province (present-day Kagawa Prefecture) written in the fifth year of the Tenpō era (1834)—Furuta Daizen Dayu Shigeharu received this jacket from Toyotomi Hideyoshi in recognition of his military accomplishments in the Tenshō era (1573–92). Shigeharu later gave it to his retainer Imamura Rokuzaemon Kazumasa as a reward for service. There is a tendency among *tsujigahana* products made about the Tenshō era for the dyed designs to be set on a white ground, as seen here. The harmony of the white and red and the jacket's broad composition, with the young pines balanced against the earthen bank, draw out the beauty of the white ground. KA

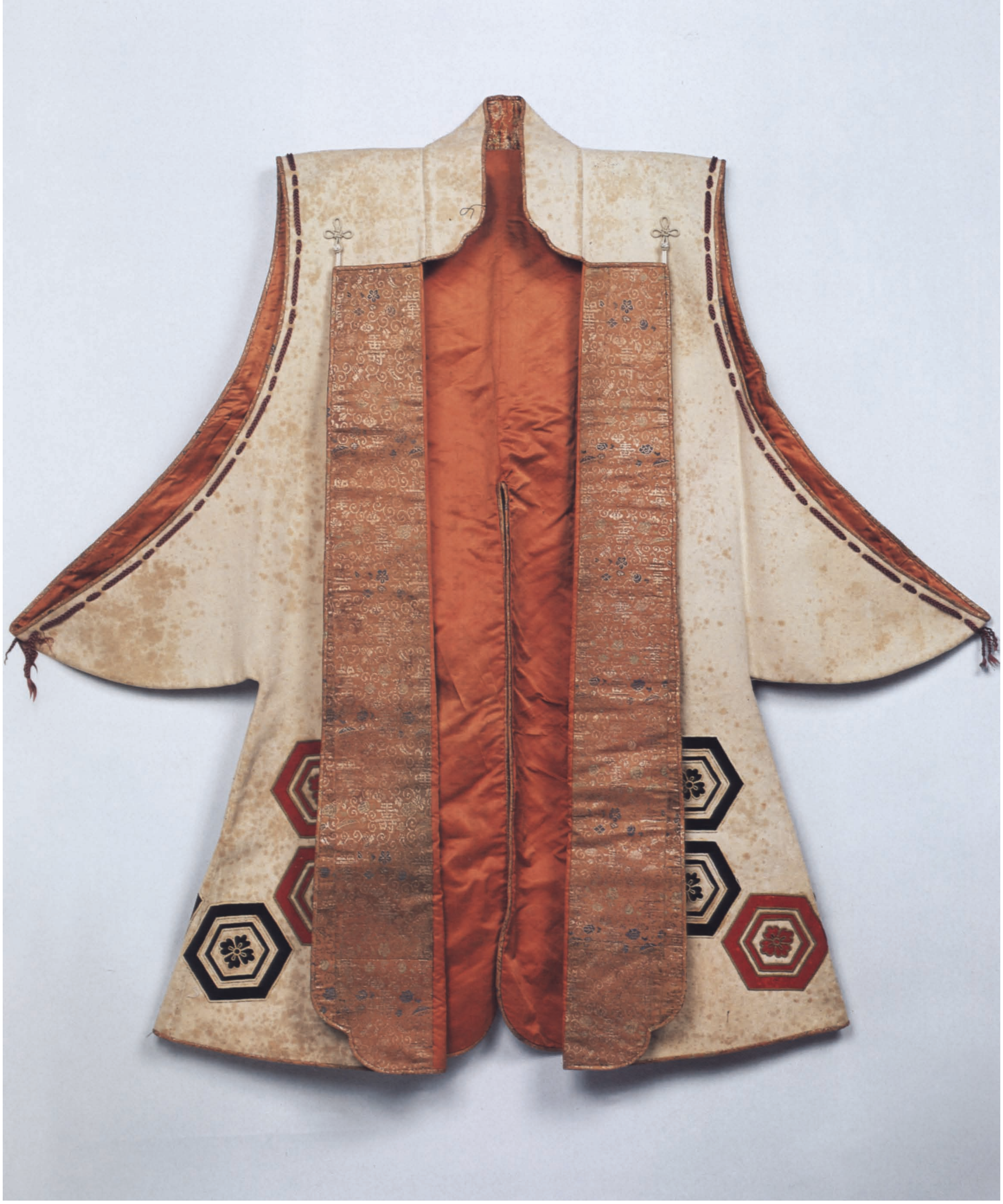
## 173.

## Leather *jinbaori* (surcoat)

## 革陣羽織

Momoyama period, 16th century
Deerskin, velvet, silk, and brocade
L. 117.5 cm (46¼ in.); W. 58.5 cm (23 in.)
Chido Museum, Yamagata Prefecture

In the third year of the Tenshō era (1575), the combined forces of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu defeated the army of Takeda Katsuyori at the pivotal Battle of Nagashino. A critical component of their victory was an attack at night by Sakai Tadatsugu, an aged retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who overcame the Takeda forces defending the fortifications of Mount Tobinosuyama. Oda Nobunaga is said to have given this *jinbaori* to Tadatsugu as a reward for his victory, probably together with a *tachi* by Sanemitsu and an *ito maki no tachi* mounting (cat. nos. 79, 120). The outer surface of the coat is made of white deerskin leather. The underside of the collar is lined in gold brocade with *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork) and scattered characters indicating longevity. The back is divided by a long vertical slit, and the bottom of the coat flares outward. The semicircular sleeves swell broadly at the bottom, and the ends are fitted with drawstrings. The hem is decorated with so-called tortoiseshell designs in black and scarlet velvet. KA



**174.**

## Velvet *jinbaori* (surcoat) with *mokkō* and paulownia *mon* (insignia)

## 木瓜桐紋緋羅紗陣羽織

Edo period, late 16th century
Wool
H. 97.9 cm (38½ in.); W. 54.5 cm (21½ in.)
Ōsaka Castle Museum

About the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, imported dyed textiles such as brocade, damask, wool, velvet, tapestry, and printed cotton were used to make especially luxurious *jinbaori* (surcoats), some of which even incorporated feathers or animal fur. Imported scarlet-dyed woolens, in particular, were coveted by military commanders during the Sengoku-jidai (Age of Wars, ca. 1467–1568) and were often used to make *jinbaori* or *dōfuku*, a short, hip-length jacket. This *jinbaori* is said to have been given to Toyotomi Hideyoshi by Oda Nobunaga. The exterior has the five-petal *mokkō mon* (insignia) of the Oda family, known as Oda *mokkō*, in the center of the upper back and several paulownia *mon* below. The color of the woolen ground is referred to as "*shōjō*" scarlet after creatures from Chinese folktales who resemble monkeys and whose blood was said to be of the reddest color on earth. KA

**175.**

## Mantle

## 天鵞絨マント

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Momoyama period, 16th century
Cut velvet
H. 81.5 cm (32⅛ in.); W. at shoulder,
46 cm (18⅛ in.)
Nagoya City Hideyoshi and Kiyomasa
Memorial Museum

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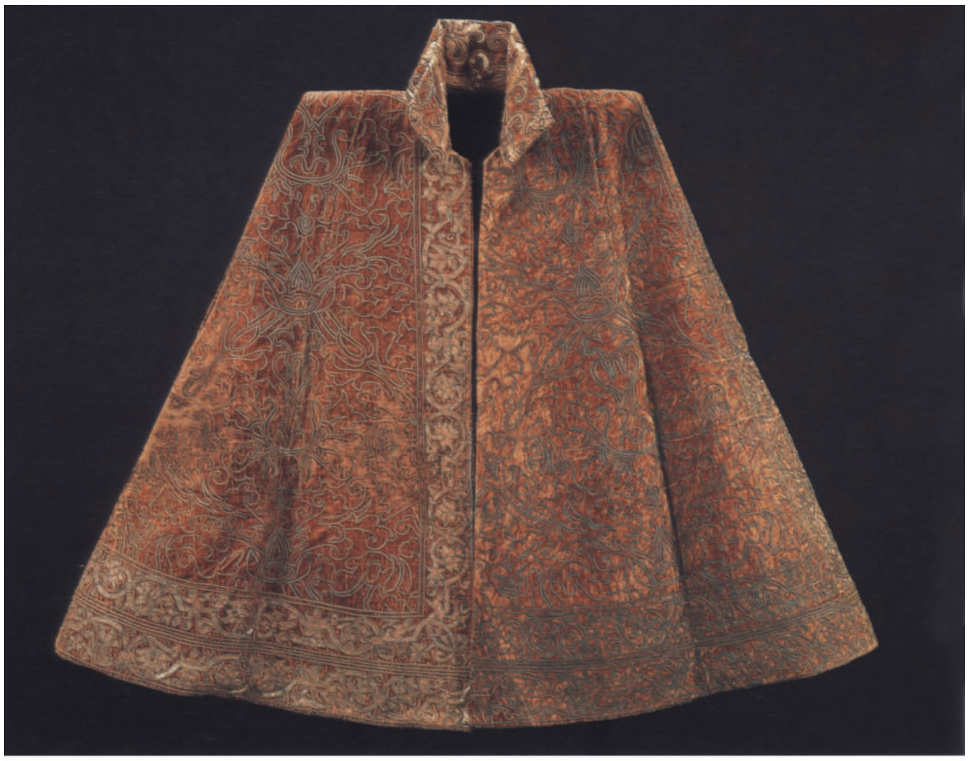
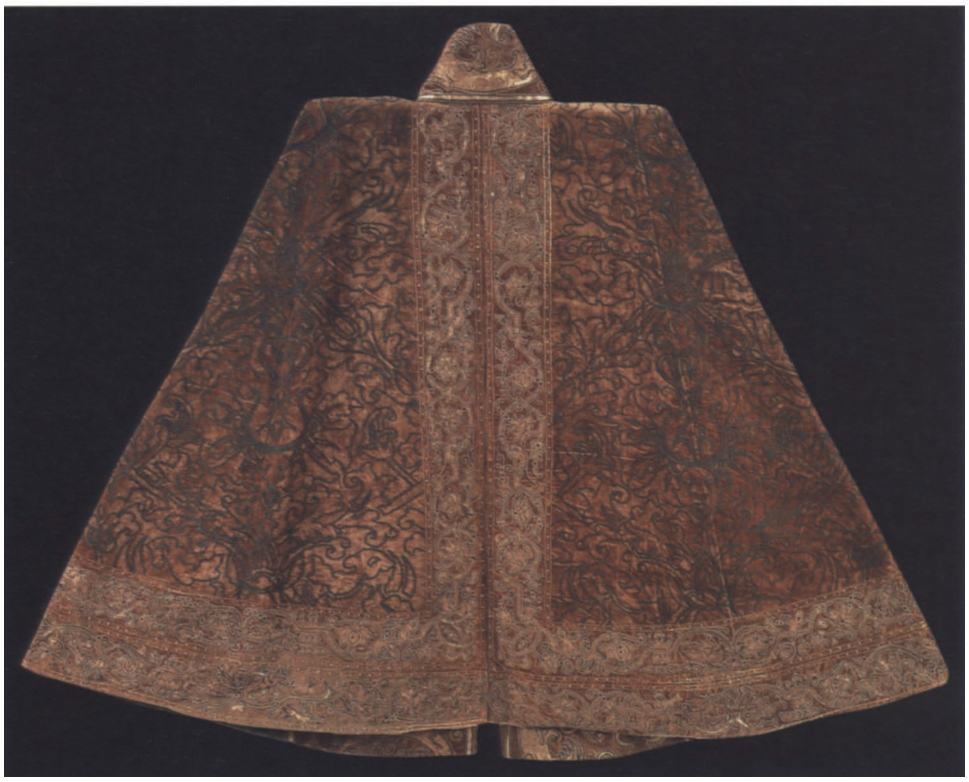
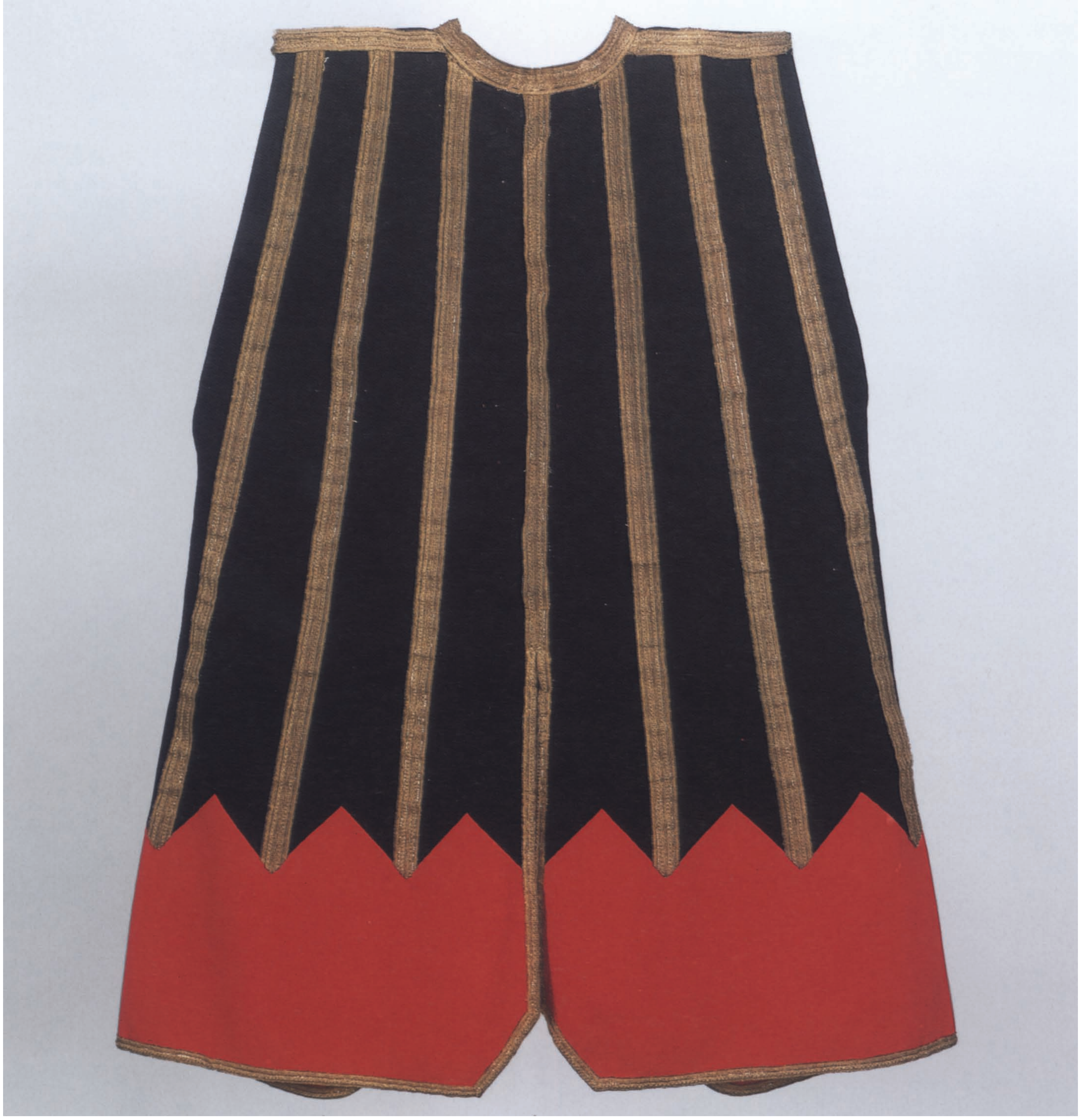
Most surviving European-style velvet cloaks in Japan were meant to be wrapped around the body like a mantle, such as the red cloak with peonies and grasses formerly owned by Uesugi Kenshin (Important Cultural Property, Uesugi Jinja) and the brown velvet cloak with bird and flower designs in the Sakai Municipal Museum. This example, said to have been owned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), was altered from its original form to be used as a *jinbaori*, a type of surcoat worn over armor. It is decorated with a repeating pattern in cut velvet of peonies and scrollwork on a brown ground. Human figures, apes, and additional scrollwork are embroidered along the edges of the openings at front and around the lower border. Dragons amid scrollwork are embroidered on the collar.

Such garments, modeled on clothing brought to Japan by Spanish and Portuguese traders, were popular among the samurai for their unusual shape and cloth. Recent research has shown that this cloak was made in China, although the design is based on a European original. The embroidery seems to reflect Indian or Portuguese influences.

KA







**176.**

Black wool *jinbaori* (surcoat) with red mountains motif

重要文化財
黒羅紗地裾緋羅紗山形文陣羽織

Momoyama period, 17th century
Wool
H. 94 cm (37 in.); W. 45 cm (17¾ in.)
Sendai City Museum, Miyagi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

This *jinbaori*—together with the flag with sun motif (cat. no. 14) and the black-lacquered five-plate cuirass armor (cat. no. 13)—belonged to Date Masamune (1567–1636), first lord of the Sendai *han* (domain). At the hem is a motif of mountain peaks in red wool set into the black wool cloth of the coat. Silver and gold brocaded bands line the front and back as well as the hem, collar, and arm openings. The surcoat is closed at the front by brown wool cords embroidered with *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork). The *nanban* (foreign) style of the garment can be seen at the front, which joins together perfectly at the center, like a mantle, and at the neck, where there are marks indicating the placement of a now-missing round pleated collar.

KA

### 177.

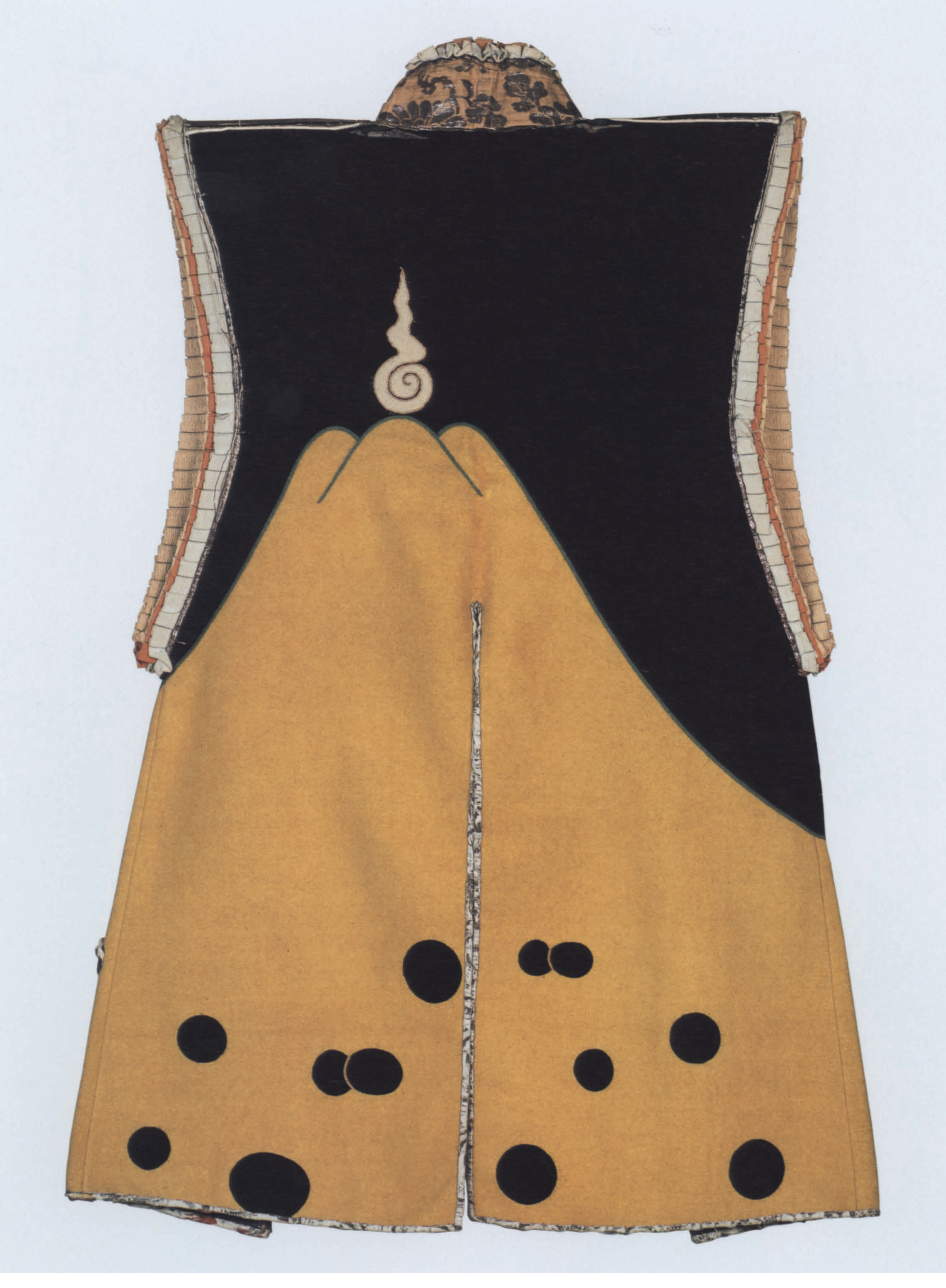
## *Jinbaori* (surcoat) with sacred volcano motif

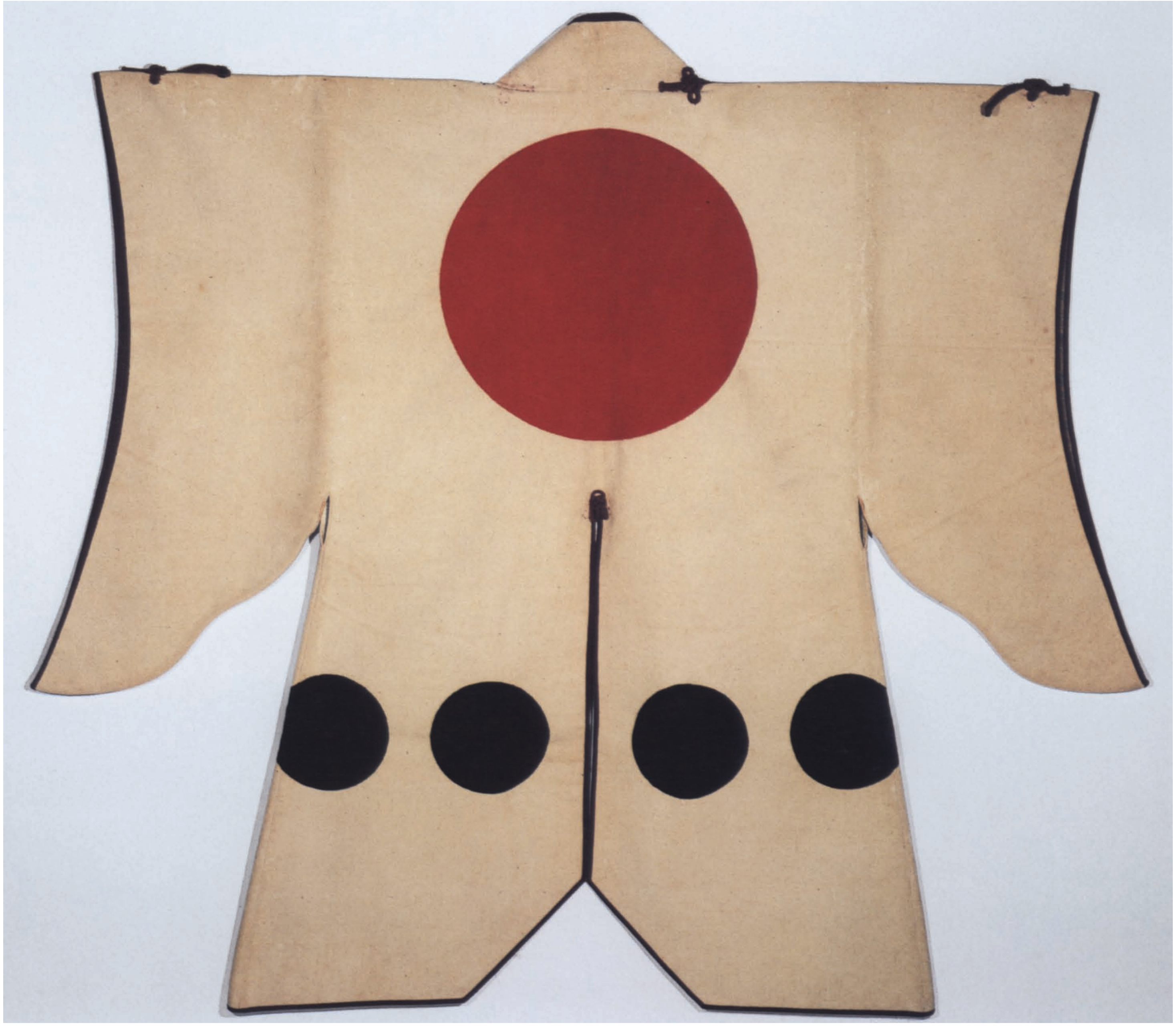
## 黒羅紗地御神火文陣羽織

Edo period, 17th century
*Rasha* (wool), brocade, and crepe
H. 97.8 cm (38½ in.); W. at shoulders, 52 cm (20½ in.)
Ōsaka Castle Museum

The graphically powerful design on the back of this *jinbaori* (surcoat) depicts a stylized volcano in bright yellow wool against a black wool ground. The volcano is edged in green braid. Water-droplet motifs—formed by cutting away the vivid yellow fabric to reveal the black wool beneath—are arrayed along the hem. The swirl of smoke rising up from the mountain's triple peak indicates that it represents a sacred volcano, in this case said to be Mount Fuji, the subject of religious veneration in Japan since ancient times. A mandala dating to the Muromachi period depicts worshipers ascending the holy mountain in pilgrimage. There are also paintings of Mount Fuji that date to the Edo period, when it first came to be used as a motif on craft objects such as ceramics and textiles.

The lining is gold brocade with small paulownia and circle *mon* (insignia). The garment is split from the bottom to the middle of the back, and the coat flares out at the hem. Although sleeveless, it has narrow edging around the arm holes. The high collar is finished with a gold brocade of flowering peony, chrysanthemum, and plum-bough motifs. The collar and sleeve-hole edgings are pleated with three layers of white, crimson, and pale yellow crepe. The tie cords at the front are made of crimson wool and are circular in section. KA





**178.**

*Jinbaori* (surcoat) with sun emblem on a white woolen ground
白羅紗地日の丸紋陣羽織

Edo period, 17th century
Wool
H. 108 cm (42½ in.); W. at shoulder, 56 cm (22 in.)
Ishikawa-ken History Museum, Ishikawa Prefecture

This *jinbaori* is said to have been owned by Chō Shoren, the fourth-generation descendant of an elder retainer of the Kaga *han* (domain). The sleeves are rounded at the shoulders and have large openings; the wavy contour along their bottom edges contrasts with the straight hem. The back has a striking design with a red sun emblem centered on a white ground, while the black circles arranged along the hem are thought to represent the moon and stars.

Heavenly bodies such as the sun, moon, and stars were believed to be endowed with supernatural aspects. When used as designs, they expressed authority. The *mon* (insignia) of the Chō family is known as *zeni kuyo mon*, or "nine stars *mon* with coins," which originally comprised the sun, moon, and surrounding stars. Thus, in addition to authority, this *jinbaori* conveyed the protective blessing of the heavens.

KA

**179.**

### *Jinbaori* (surcoat) with Dutch sailing ships

### 白羅紗地帆船文様陣羽織

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Edo period, 18th century
Wool and crepe
H. 85 cm (33½ in.); W. at shoulder, 100 cm (39⅜ in.)
Maeda Ikutokukai Foundation, Tokyo

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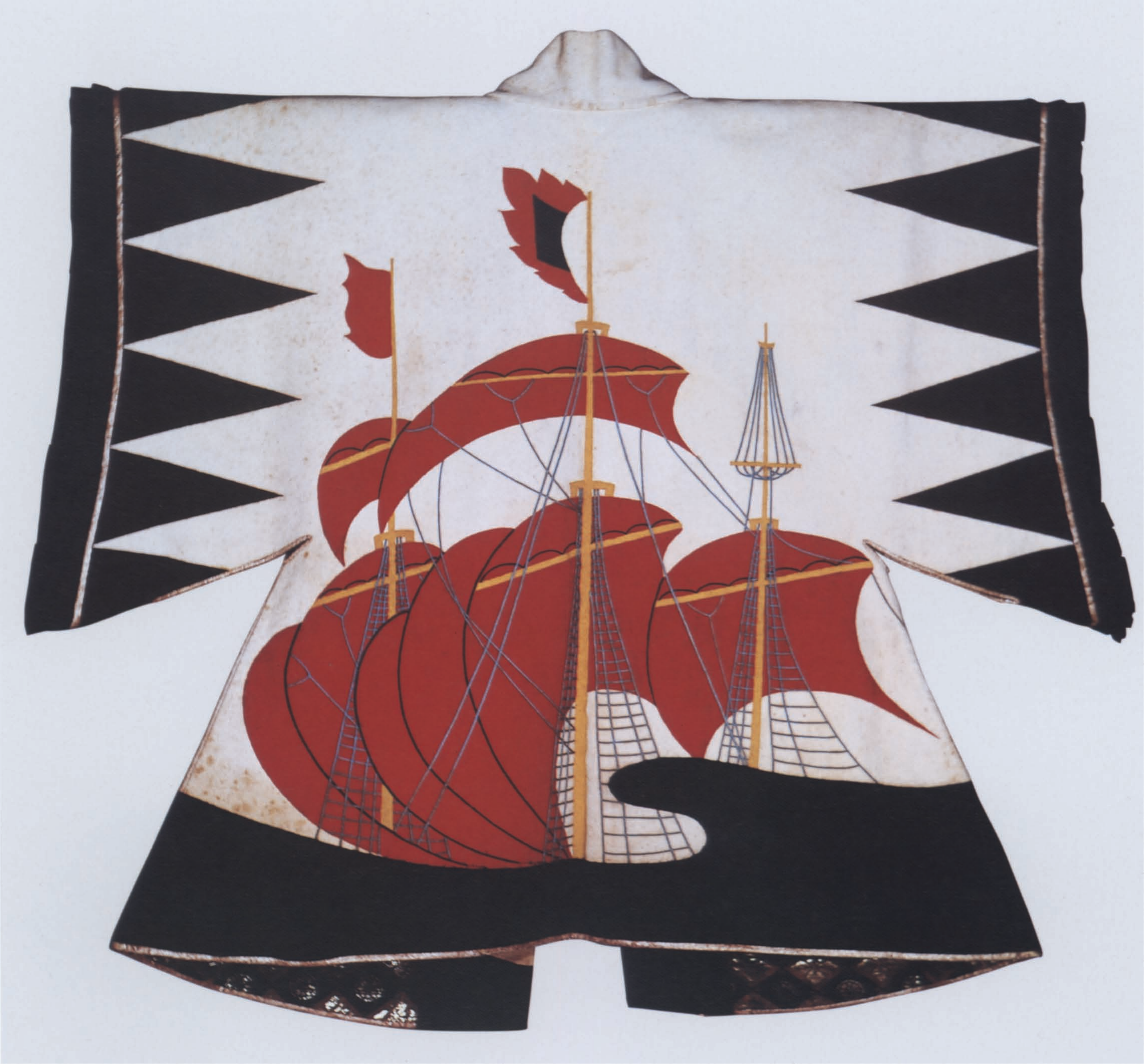
By the middle Edo period, the great battles long waged among Japan's rulers had become a thing of the past. Accordingly, the *jinbaori*, originally a surcoat worn over an armor, evolved into a type of formal wear for samurai, leading to a preoccupation with the garment's materials and designs. This example is decorated with representations of the kind of Dutch ships that brought rare and exotic commodities to Japan, reflecting an interest in foreign lands. It is said to have been owned by Shigehiro, the eighth generation of the Maeda house, lords of the Kaga *han* (domain).

The bold decoration recalls the motif of five Dutch ships with their sails catching the wind, familiar from Japanese export porcelain. To make the design, separate white, red, and black pieces of wool were applied to a wool ground. The black sawtooth pattern on the sleeves, representing ocean waves, emphasizes the white of the sky and the red of the sails. The ropes on the masts are embroidered, while the sleeves, underarms, and hem are edged in gold. The openings of the sleeves are further embellished with a double edging of yellow-green crepe.

KA



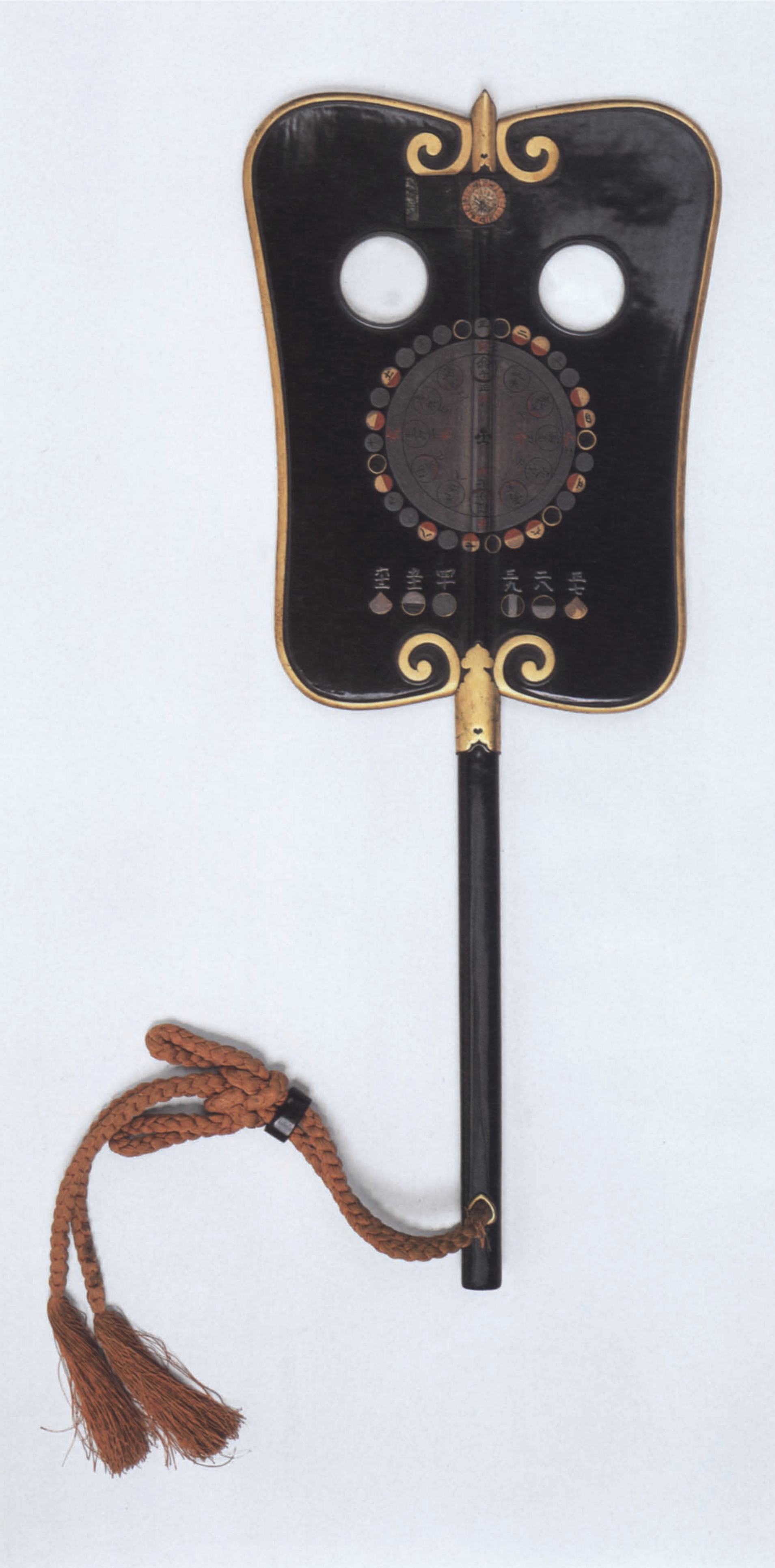
## 180.

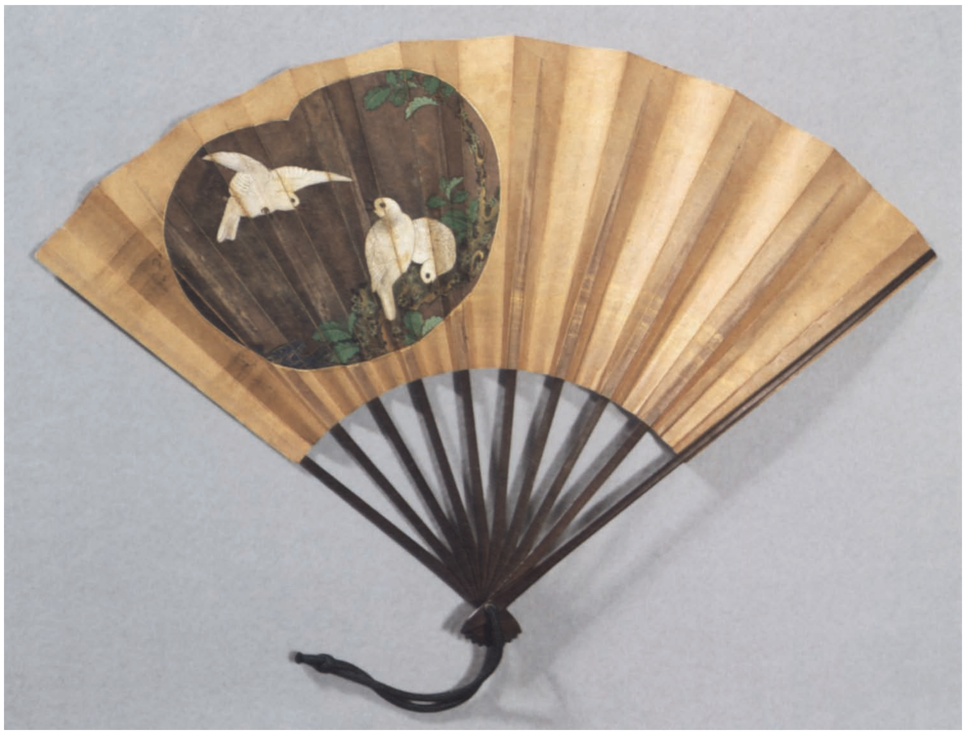
## *Gunbai uchiwa* (signal fan)

## 軍配団扇

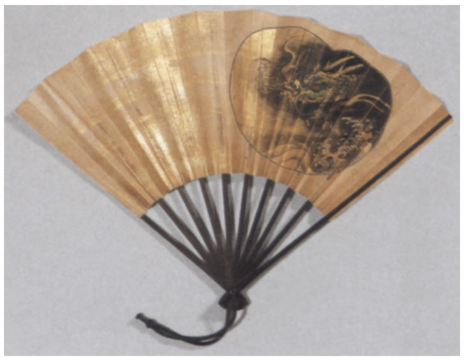
Momoyama period, 16th century
Wood, glass, lacquer, and gold
L. 55 cm (21⅝ in.); W. 21.5 cm (8½ in.)
Chido Museum, Yamagata Prefecture

The various implements used by Japanese military commanders to signal orders on the battlefield or to direct troop movements were referred to as *jineigu*, or "command equipment." Such pieces included the *gunsen* (folding military fan), *saihai* (command baton), *jindaiko* (battlefield drum), and the *gunbai*, a type of *uchiwa* (fixed fan) designed for military use and thus made of robust materials such as lacquered wood. This example is made of wood and has been lacquered black overall and given gold *fukurin* (edging). Two large magnifying glasses are set into it at top along with a magnetic compass at top center: unique features for a *gunbai*, and no doubt the latest fashion in foreign styles during the Momoyama period. The fan is said to have been in the possession of Sakai Tadatsugu (1527–1596), one of the Shi-Tennō, or the "Four Trusted Retainers" of the Tokugawa. It was passed down in the Sakai family, lords of the Shōnai domain. ST





Reverse



## 181.

## *Gunsen* (folding military fan) with white doves and dragon motifs

## 白鳩龍図軍扇

Edo period, 17th century
Bamboo, paper, and pigment
L. 36.4 cm (14⅜ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

The *gunsen*, a type of fan used by military commanders to signal orders on the battlefield, was a vital piece of equipment for preserving order in the ranks. This example has three white doves depicted on the obverse within a circular field on a gold ground. Two dragons are depicted on the reverse. The fan was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family as a possession of Tokugawa Yoshinao, first lord of the Owari domain (in present-day Aichi Prefecture). ST

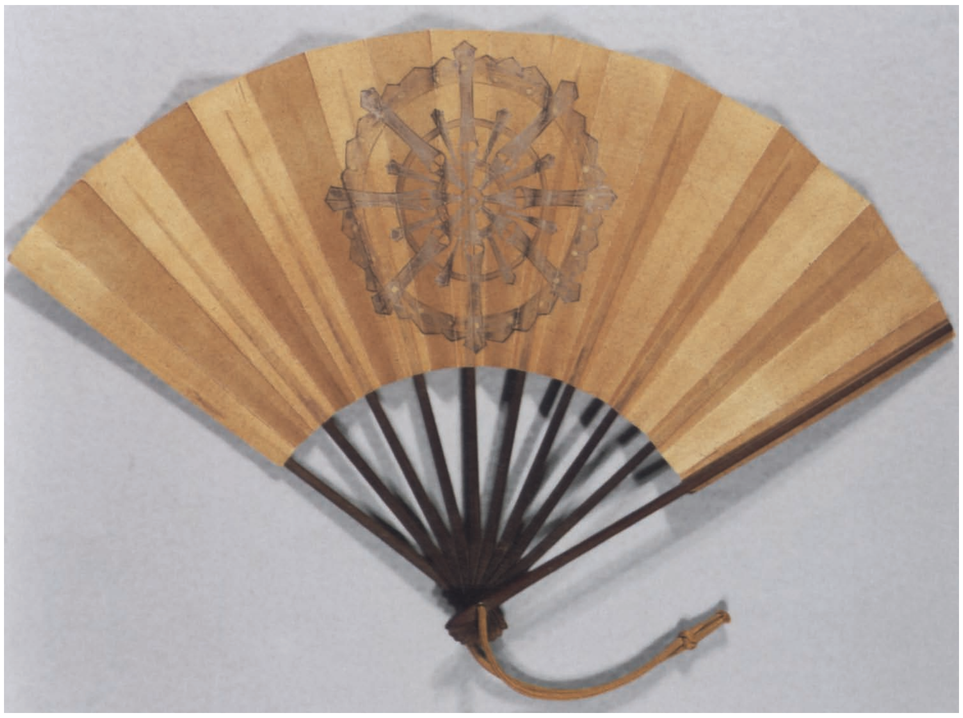
## 182.

## *Gunsen* (folding military fan) with the Buddhist Wheel of Law

## 輪宝図軍扇

Edo period, 17th century
Bamboo, paper, and pigmented lacquer
L. 36.4 cm (14⅜ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

The Buddhist Wheel of Law symbolizes the concept of the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. The large wheel at the center of this *gunsen*, a type of military fan (see cat. no. 181), is depicted in *gindei*, which is lacquer that contains silver powder. The fan was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family as a possession of Tokugawa Yoshinao, first lord of the Owari domain. ST



## 183.

## *Saihai* (command baton) with gilt paper

## 金紙采配

Edo period, 18th century
Wood, paper, gold, lacquer, and silk
L. of shaft, 46.4 cm (18¼ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

The *saihai* is a baton that was used by military commanders to issue orders on the battlefield. In its most basic form, it comprises a bunch of long paper strips tied together at the end of a wooden shaft. The strips at the end of this example are covered in gold. The shaft is made of *tagayasan* wood. The baton was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family as a possession of Tokugawa Muneyoshi, ninth lord of the Owari domain.

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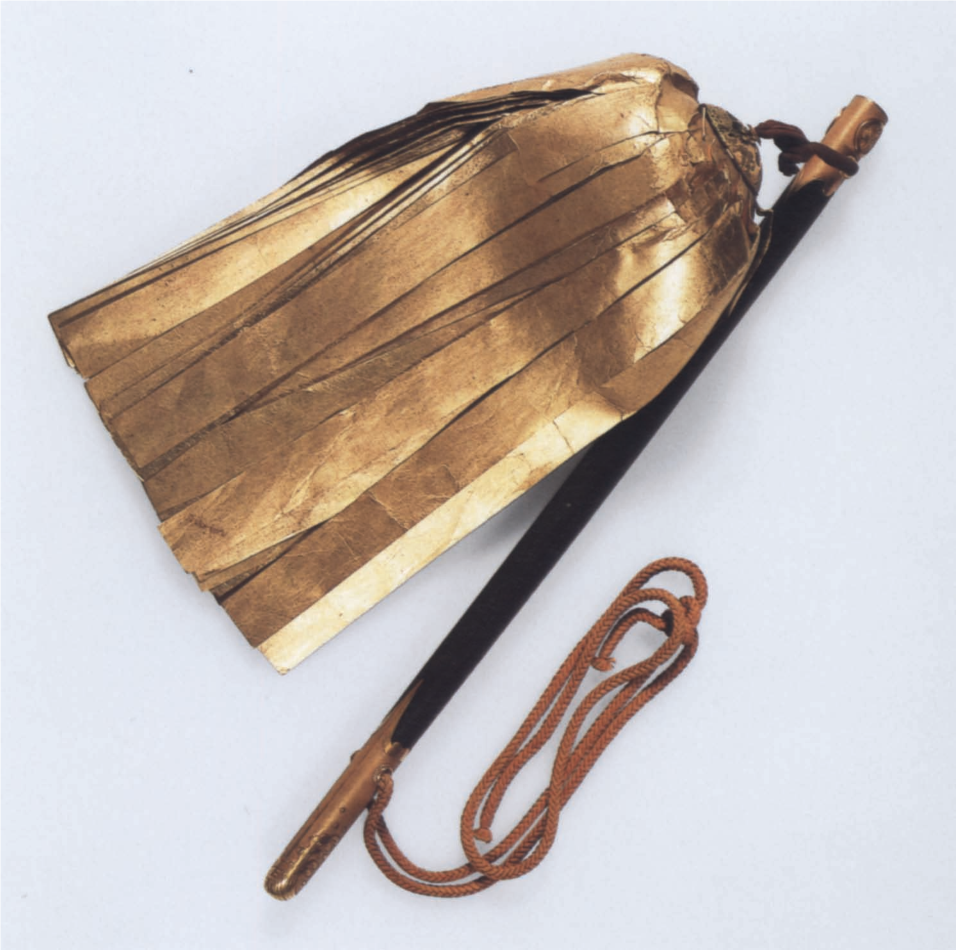


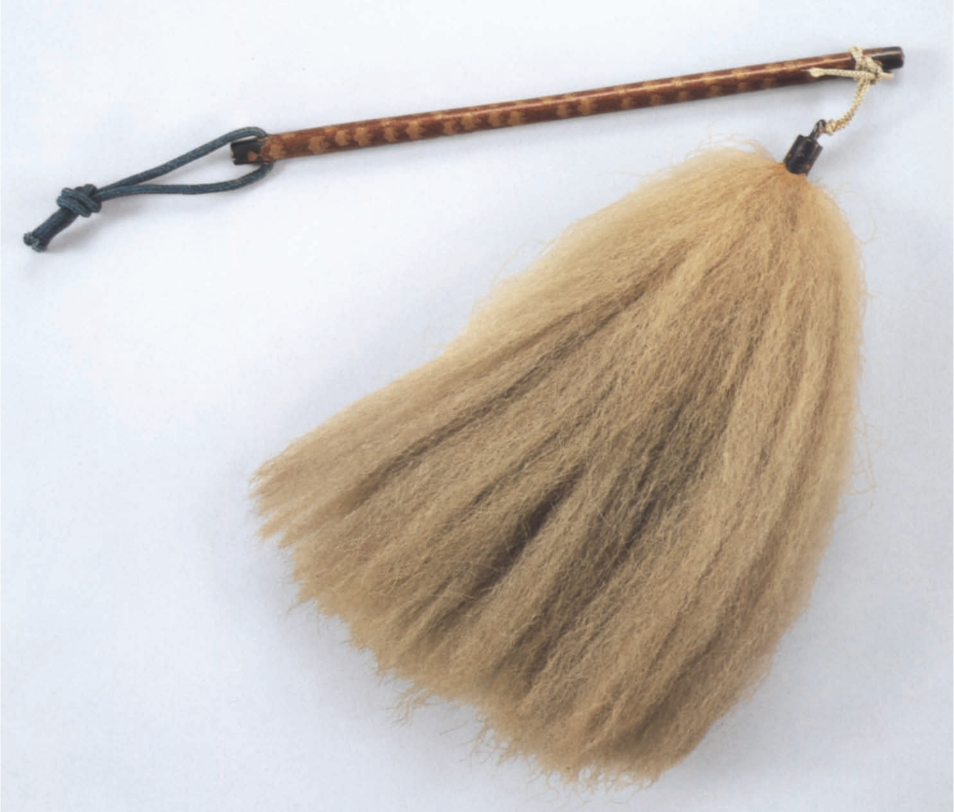
## 184.

## *Saihai* (command baton) with white bear fur

## 白熊毛采配

Edo period, 18th century
Bear fur, wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
L. of shaft, 36.6 cm (14⅜ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

This *saihai* (see cat. no. 183) has white bear fur (*shirakuma ke*) fixed on a cord attached to the end of the shaft. (It is also possible that the hair is actually that of the yak, an animal indigenous to Tibet and northern India.) The shaft itself, made of lacquered wood, is decorated with scattered paulownia *mon* (insignia) applied in gold *maki-e*. The baton was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family as a possession of Matsudaira Michimasa, nineteenth son of Tokugawa Tsunanari, the third-generation lord of the Owari domain. ST

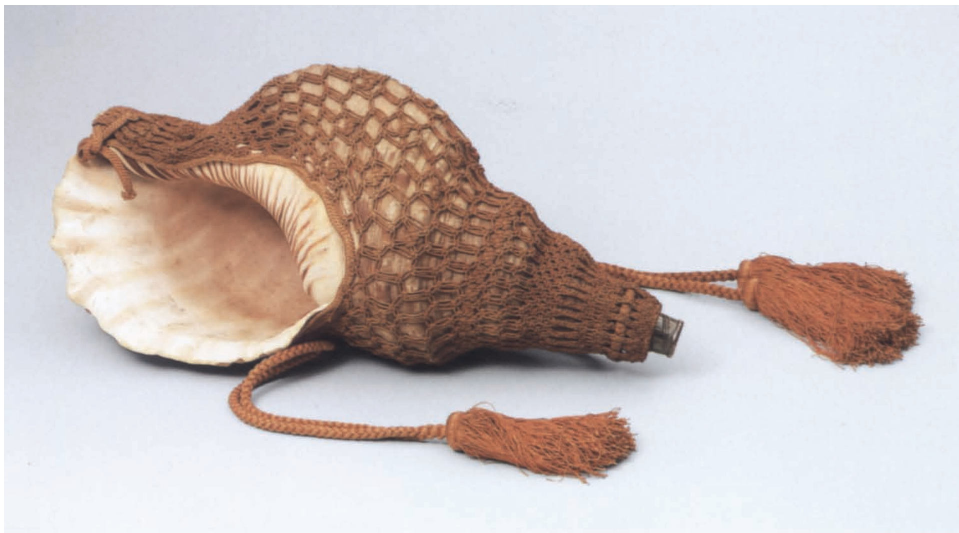


## 185.

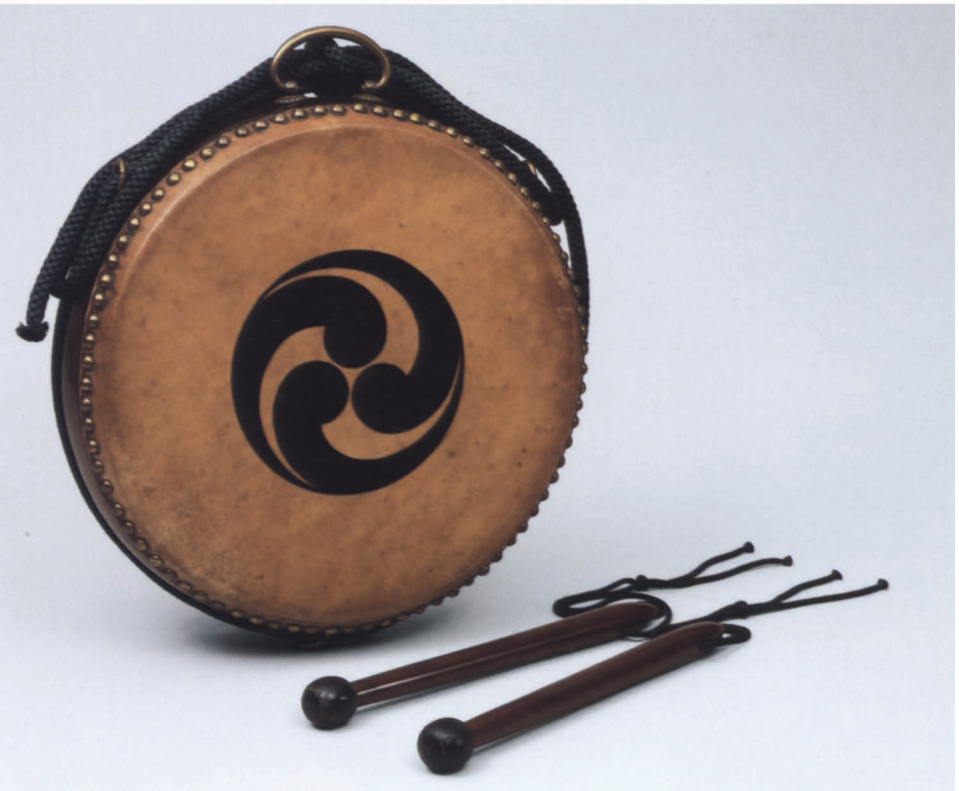
### *Hora* (conch-shell trumpet)

### 法螺

Edo period, 17th century
Shell, hemp, and silk
L. 42.4 cm (16¾ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture



War drums (see cat. no. 186) and conch-shell trumpets were the primary means of signaling military commands through the lines of Japanese armies. The trumpets were made by piercing a hole in the end of the shell of a conch (a marine mollusk with a large spiral shell) and fitting it with a metal mouthpiece. Originally conch trumpets were ritual instruments used in monasteries, but they were also carried by the *yamabushi*, adherents of a shamanistic sect of Buddhism. They were known by several different names, such as *hora*, *horagai*, or *jingai*, according to how they were used. In battle, for example, the trumpet was referred to as a *jingai*. They were also employed to signal events such as meal times, messages and responses, and assemblies, much like a Western bugle. This trumpet was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family as a possession of Tokugawa Yoshinao, first lord of the Owari domain. ST



## 186.

### *Jindaiko* (battlefield drum) with *mitsudomo-e* (triple-comma motif)

### 巴紋陣太鼓

Edo period, 17th century
Wood, leather, textile, lacquer, and copper alloy
Diam. 37.9 cm (14⅞ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

The *jindaiko*, a type of drum beaten to signal troops to advance or withdraw, is believed to have been used on the battlefield beginning in the Sengoku-jidai, or Age of Wars (ca. 1467–1568). This example has leather stretched over both ends, each of which is embellished in black lacquer with a triple-comma motif (*mitsudomo-e*) that forms a tight circle. There are two drumsticks. Along with the *hora* (cat. no. 185), the drum was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family as a possession of Tokugawa Yoshinao, first lord of the Owari domain. ST

**187.**

## Archery equipment: *shigeto no yumi* (rattan-bound bow) with four types of arrows; *nuri utsubo* (lacquered quiver); and *yugake* (archer’s glove)

重藤弓 塗空穂 韘 矢

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Edo period, 1662
Bamboo, wood, rattan, lacquer, iron, feathers, and leather
L. of bow, 227.6 cm (89⅝ in.); L. of *kaburaya* arrows, 84.2 cm (33⅛ in.); L. of quiver, 100 cm (39⅜ in.)
Kunōzan Tōshōgū Shrine, Shizuoka Prefecture

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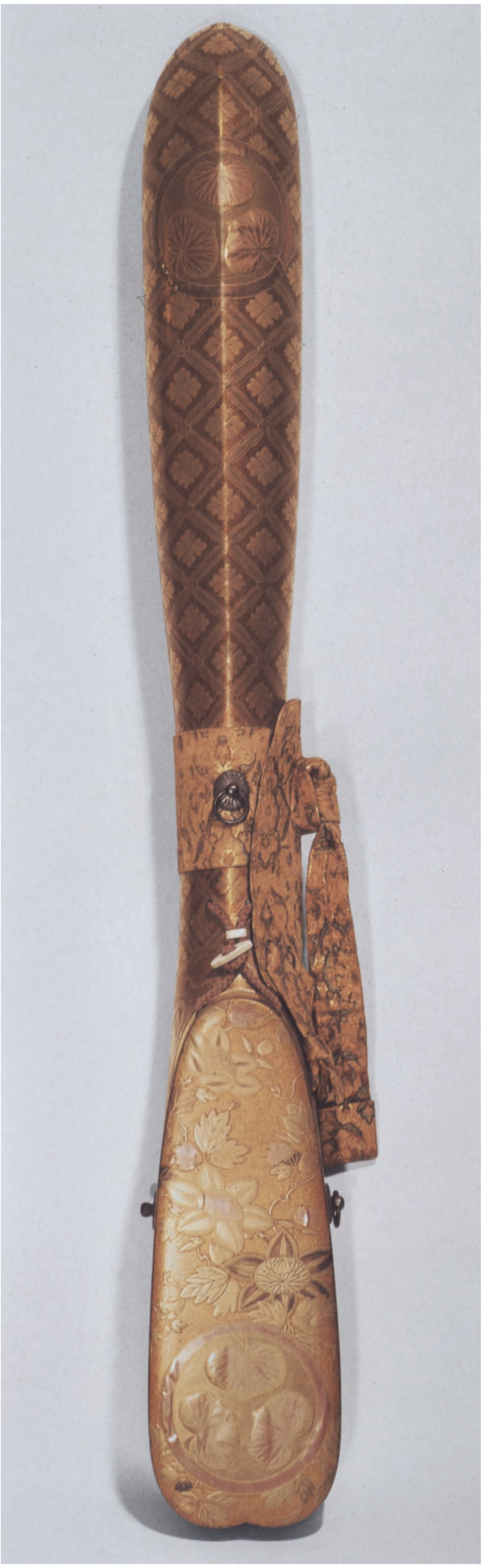
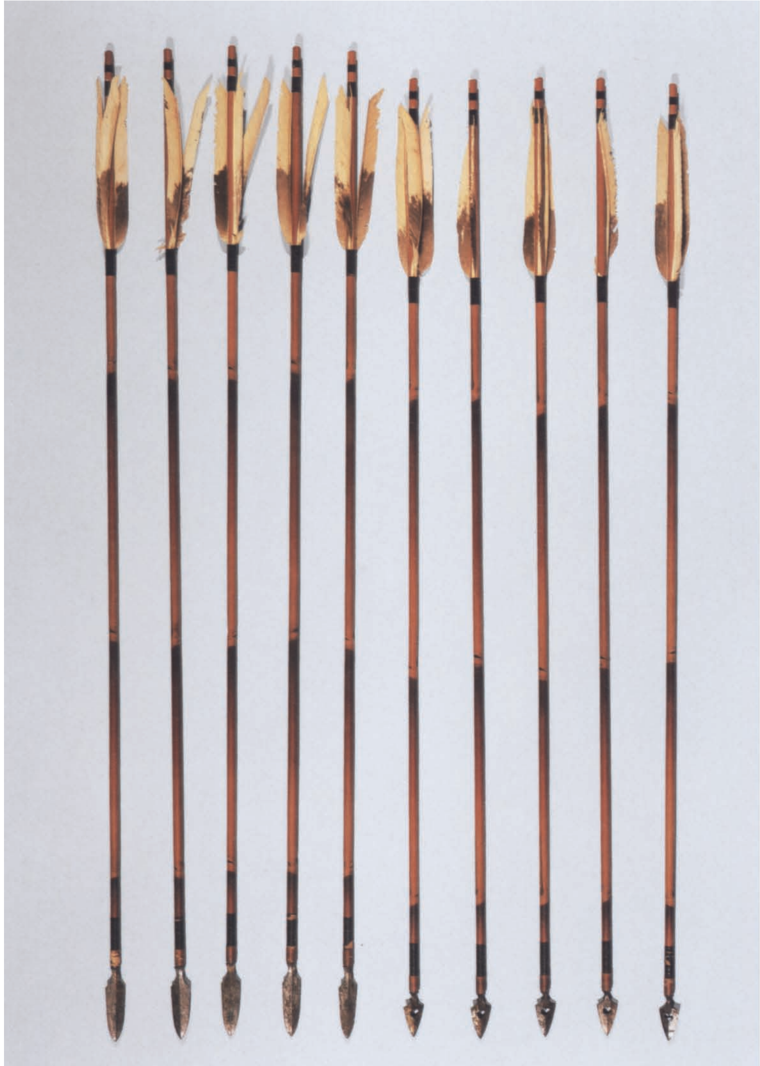
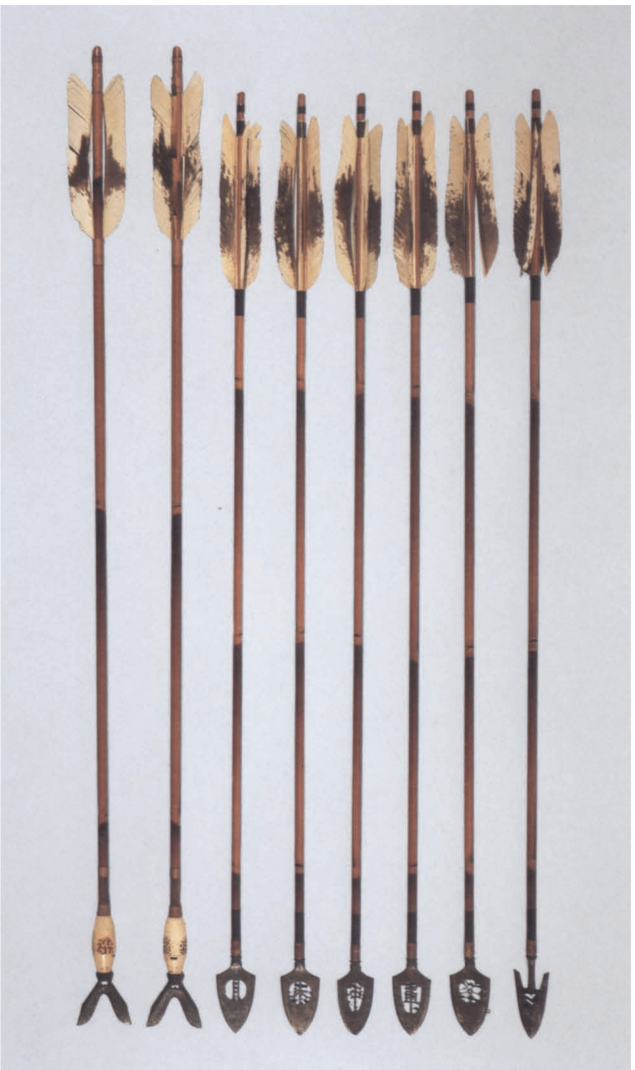


During the Heian and Kamakura periods, the bow and arrow were the main weapons of the samurai, giving rise to the saying that the samurai was “one who carries a bow.” The primary method of combat at the time was to shoot arrows while on horseback, but a long sword (a *tachi* or *koshigatana*) was carried as well, in order to finish the fight once the arrows had been exhausted. Kamakura-period samurai engaged in three types of daily training in the martial arts, or *mitsumono*. *Yabusame* involved shooting *kaburaya*-type arrows (see below) in quick succession from a galloping horse; *kasagake* was shooting from a distance with a straw hat as a target; and *inu oimono* was chasing after and shooting at dogs from horseback. Beginning in the Muromachi period, long swords (*tachi* and *katana*) and spears (*yari*) increasingly became the main offensive weapons of choice; *teppo* (matchlock guns) were introduced in 1543. Archery continued to be used in battle situations even as it began to evolve into a more ceremonial, formal tradition of target shooting.

Some bows were fashioned from hardwood; others were made of wood with bamboo attached by adhesive (*fusedake*). To prevent the bow from breaking at the knots in the wood, and to keep the wood and bamboo from separating, bows were bound with birch, cord, or rattan and also lacquered. One of the characteristics of Japanese bows is their considerable length; although there was no standard size, they were generally





fixed at about 7 *shaku* 5 *sun* (227.3 cm). Japanese bows are also unique for being asymmetrical: the upper limb (section) is considerably longer than the lower (see fig. 4.7). Black-lacquered bows with thick rattan binding at intervals, such as those in this set, are called *shigeto no yumi* and were particularly esteemed by the samurai.

Arrows were made of either wood or bamboo and were lacquered. Those for military use (*soya*) had slender, pointed arrowheads and were equipped with three fletchings to make them rotate. The *kaburaya* ("turnip") and *hirane* (flat-bladed) arrows have four fletchings to prevent rotation. Fitted on the shaft of the *kaburaya*, below the arrowhead, is a *kabura*: a sphere made of wood or horn that has a hole pierced in it, which generates a sound when the arrow is in flight. This type was often used to signal the commencement of battle.

The *utsubo* is a quiver worn horizontally at the right hip and designed to be fully closed in order to protect the arrows within from the elements. The portion with the movable lid is referred to as a *kamado* after its resemblance to a type of Japanese oven. Examples that are lacquered overall are known as *nuri utsubo*.

This archery set, which includes a *yugake* (archer's glove), was dedicated by the fourth Tokugawa shogun, Ietsuna (1641–1680), in the second year of the Kanbun era (1662) to the Kunōzan Tōshōgū, a shrine where Tokugawa Ieyasu is venerated. The bows are signed by the bowyers, Nishimori Tojiro and Kondo Kyubei. The lid of the *kamado* opening is decorated with clematis and lotus blossoms and the triple-leaf hollyhock *mon* (insignia) in *maki-e*. The *yugake*, which is for the right hand, is made of purple-dyed smoked deerskin.

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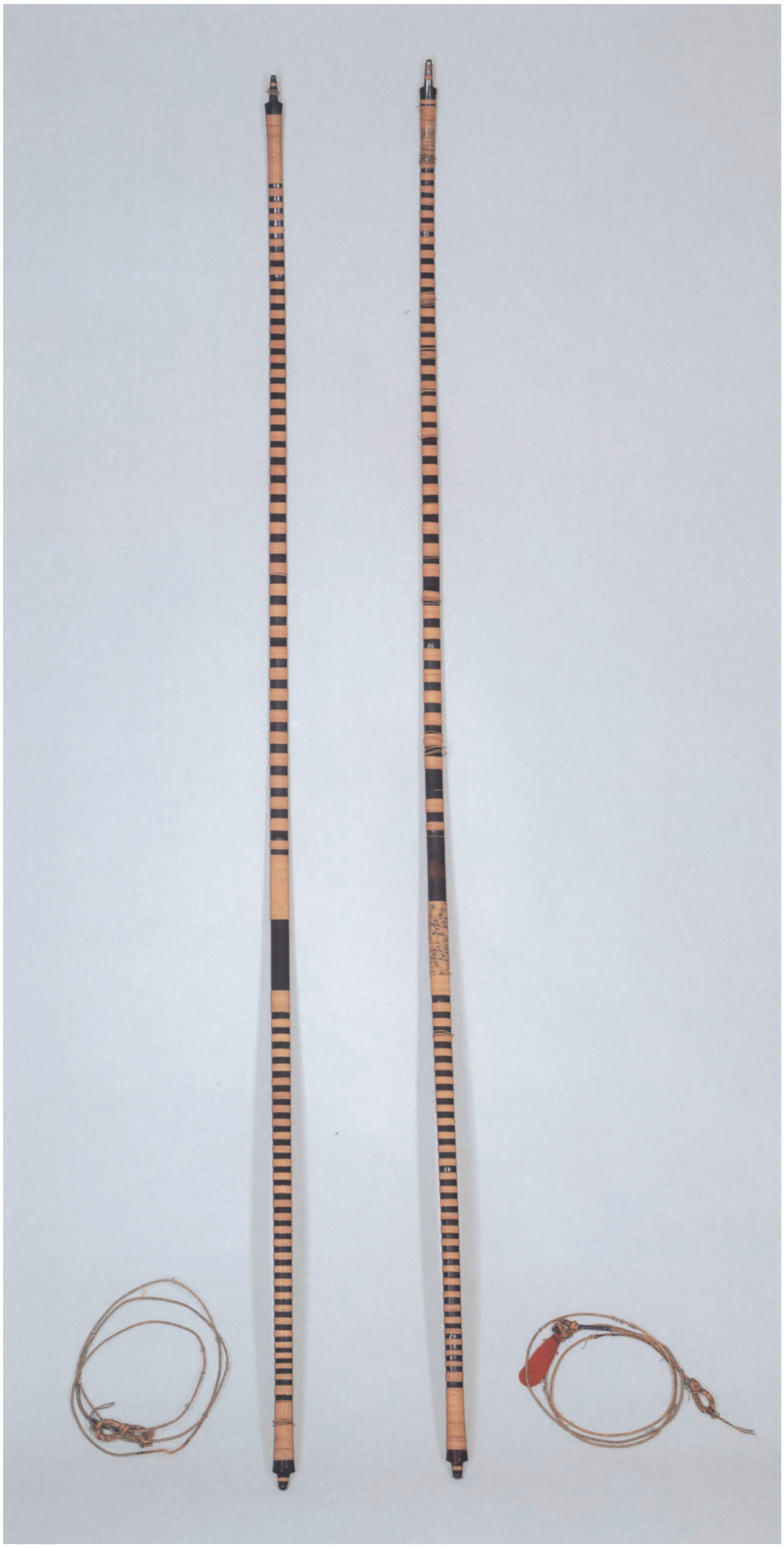
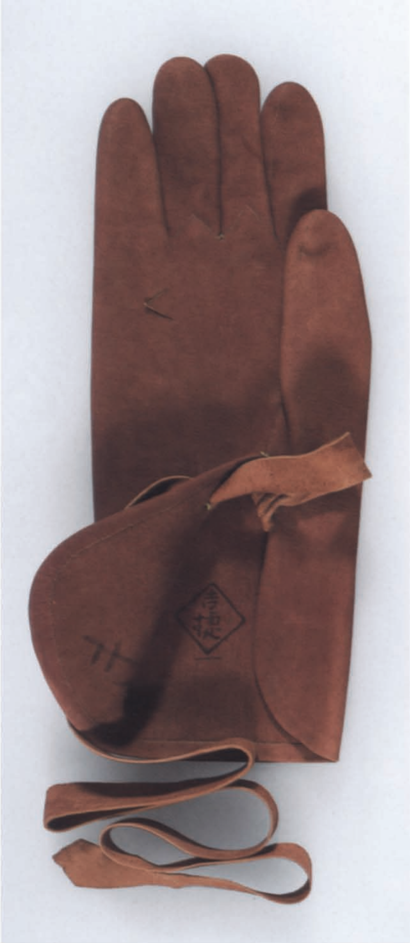
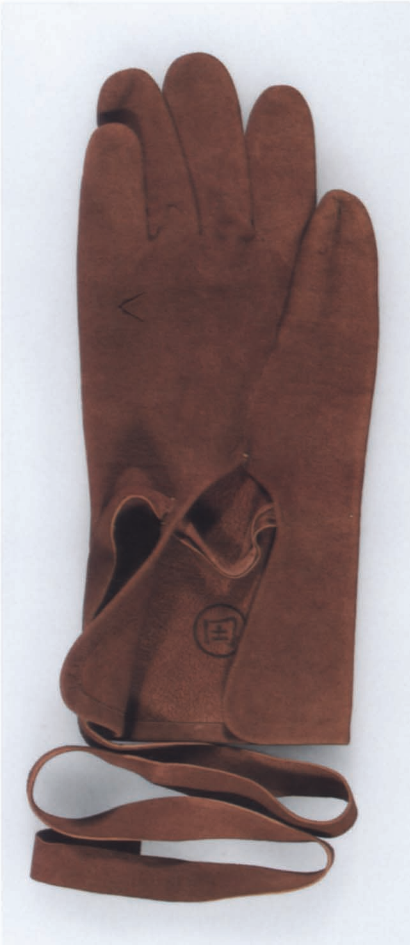






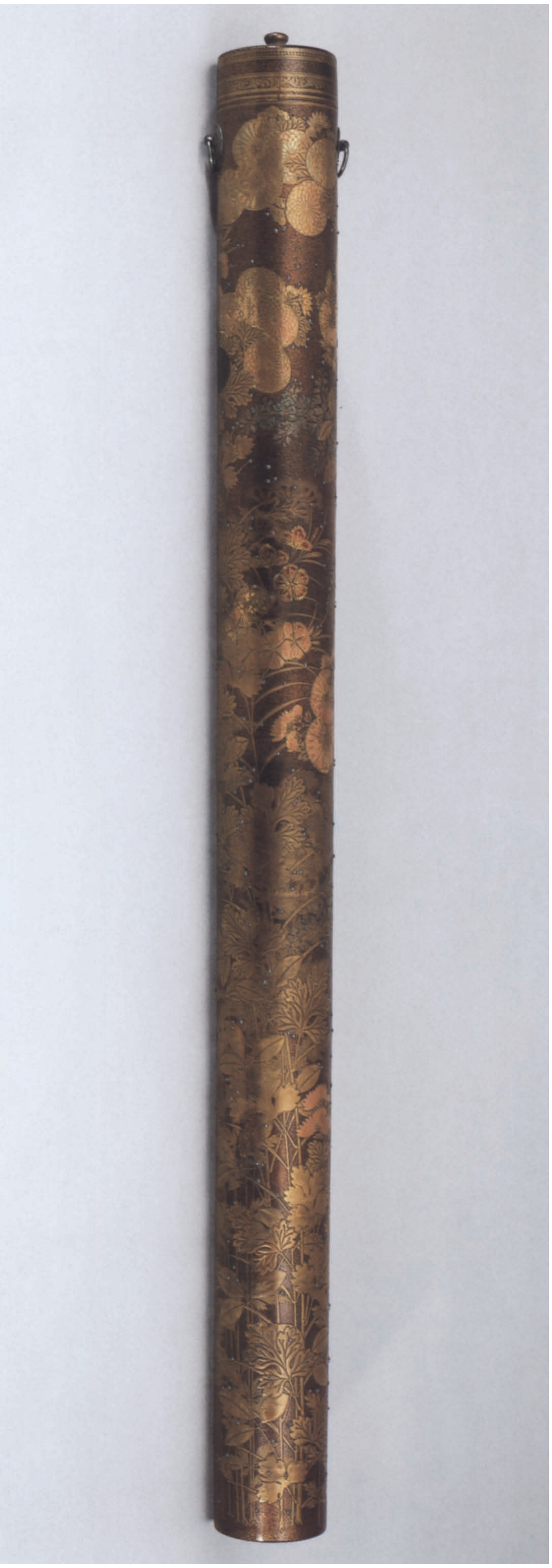
**188.**

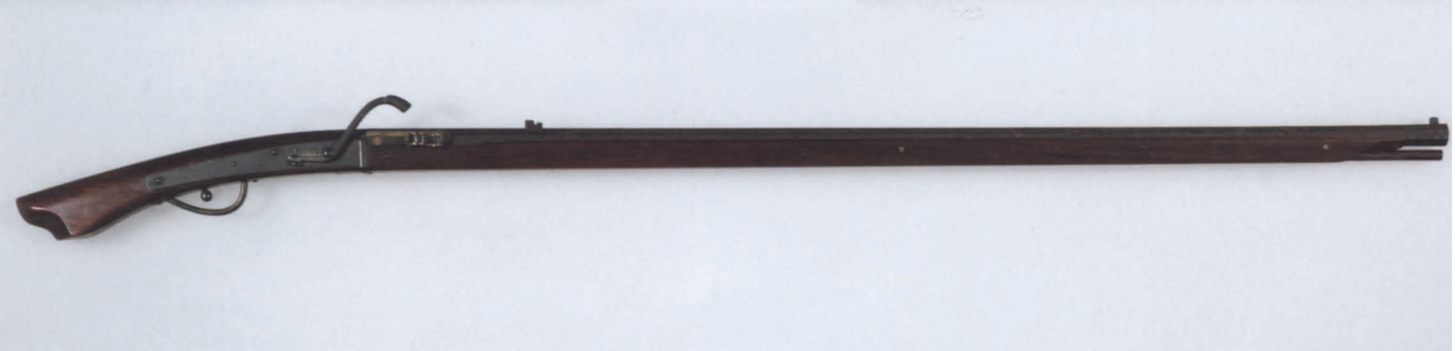
## *Yazutsu* (quiver) with autumnal motifs in *maki-e*

## 秋野蒔絵矢筒

Edo period, 17th century
Wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
L. 97.6 cm (38⅜ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

The *yazutsu* is a cylindrical quiver that is covered at the top. Unlike the *utsubo* (see cat. no. 187), the *yazutsu* was designed to be worn vertically, hanging at the right hip. This example is embellished with autumnal plants, including chrysanthemums and pinks, in *maki-e*. Such luxurious *yazutsu* as well as *utsubo* were made as part of the *chodo* (domestic effects) of daimyo during the Edo period, meaning that they were generally not intended for actual use. ST





Noda Zenshiro Kiyotaka

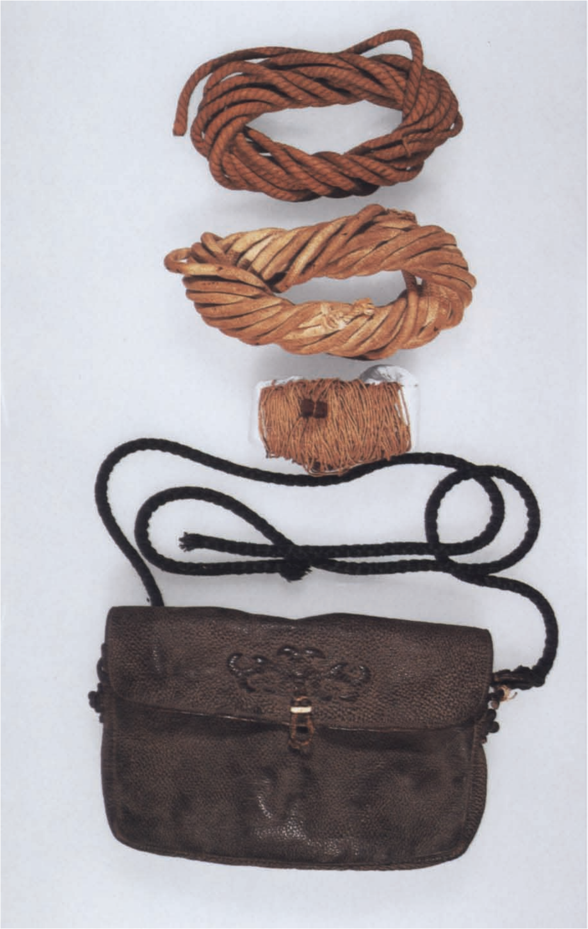
## 189.

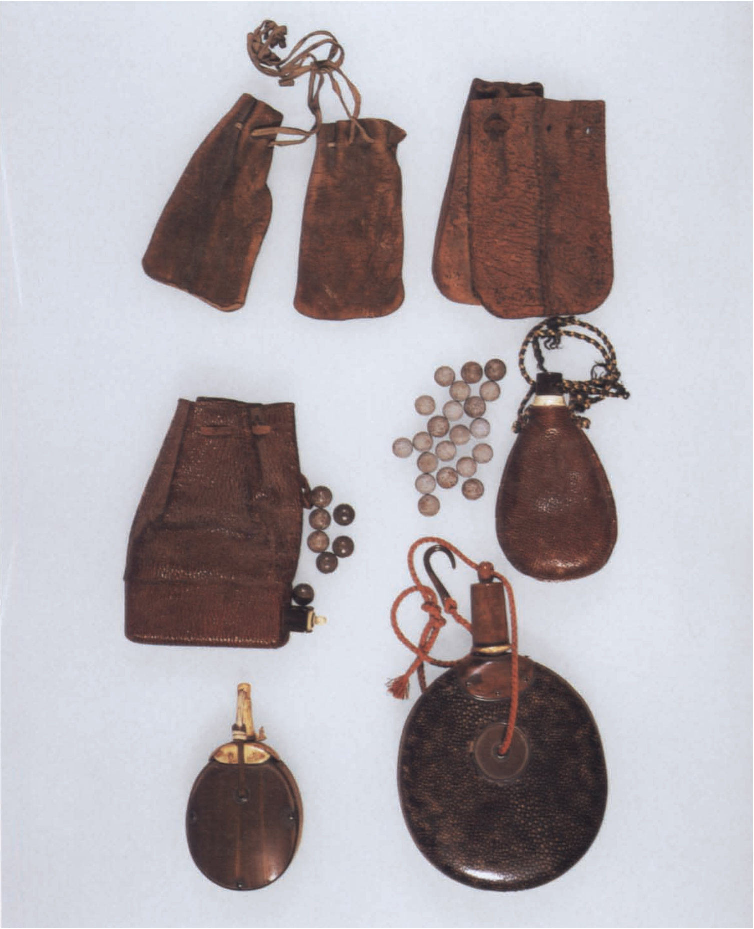
## Matchlock gun with powder flask, match cord, and other accessories

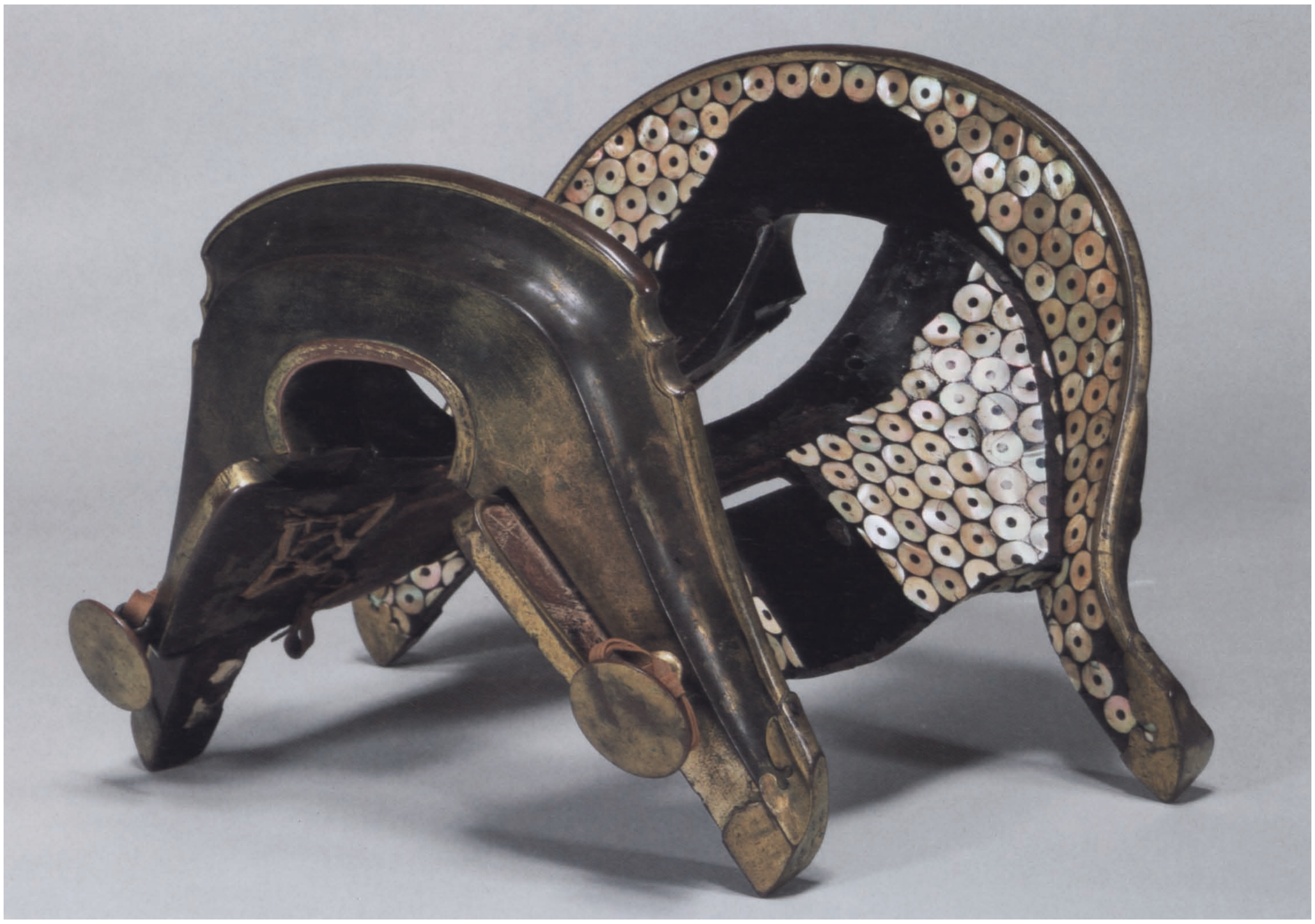
## 重要文化財 火縄銃

Edo period, 1612
Iron, wood, and *shibuichi*
L. 140.5 cm (55⅜ in.)
Inscribed on underside of barrel: 日本清尭（花押）
*NIPPON IYOTAKA* (*kaō*)
Kunōzan Tōshōgū Shrine, Shizuoka Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

The barrel of this matchlock gun, which belonged to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), is an octagonal iron tube. The serpentine, lock plate, and other metal components are made of *shibuichi* (an alloy of copper and silver), and the stock is made of flowering plum wood. The rear sight is of a type known as *sodegata* ("sleeve shape," which has a rectangular notch with inward-sloping sides), while the foresight is of the *suriwari* type (a rectangular block with a single groove cut into it along the line of sight). On the top of the barrel at the breech end is the triple-hollyhock *mon* (insignia) of the Tokugawa family, and under the rear sight at either side are a match cord design and a floral design, both in gold inlay. The barrel, according to the inscription on the underside, was made by Noda Zenshiro Kiyotaka in 1612. It was forged in three layers using sword steel and *nanban-tetsu* (imported iron). Accompanying the gun are a powder flask, bullet container, fuse, and ammunition pouch together with several musketballs. ST







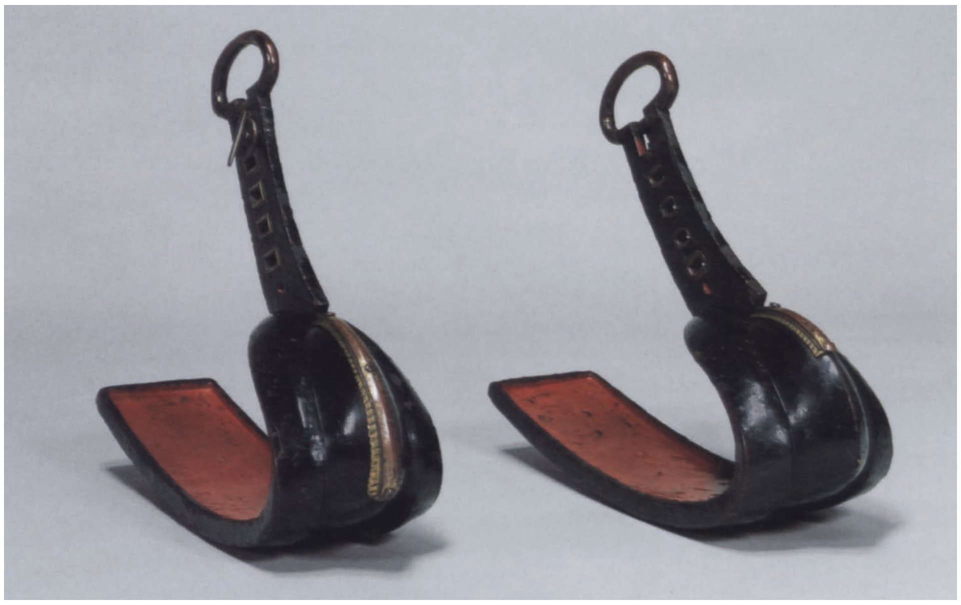
### 190.

### *Kura* (saddle) and *abumi* (stirrups) with circular motifs in mother-of-pearl inlay

国宝　鞍：円紋螺鈿鏡鞍·鐙

Kamakura period, 13th century
Saddle: wood, lacquer, mother-of-pearl inlay, and gilt copper
Stirrups: iron, lacquer, and wood
Pommel: 27.2 × 31.8 cm (10¾ × 12½ in.)
Cantle: 31.3 × 43.3 cm (12⅜ × 17 in.)
Seat: L. 42 cm (16½ in.); W. 18.2 cm (7⅛ in.)
Stirrups: 34.5 × 10.5 × 34.5 cm (13⅝ × 4⅛ × 13⅝ in.)
Mitake-jinja Shrine, Tokyo
**National Treasure**

This extraordinary saddle (*kura*), which is complete with a set of stirrups, bit, and tack, is a type known as a *kagami kura*. *Kagami* ("mirror") refers to the appearance of the pommel (*maewa*) and cantle (*shizuwa*), both of which are clad in gilt copper and originally must have been highly polished. The edges of the seat and the *yamagata* ("mountain shape," referring to the high profiles of the pommel and cantle) have gilt-copper rims. Gilt-copper pieces are also found on the feet of the pommel and cantle. Gilt-copper *shiode*, which attached to the ends of straps for other parts of the tack, survive at the front of the pommel. The inner surfaces of the pommel, cantle, and seat are all



lacquered black and have circular pieces of mother-of-pearl inlay pierced with a snake's-eye design embedded in a regular array. There is a considerable difference in thickness between the *umi* and *iso*—literally "the sea and the shore"—meaning the lower and upper registers of the pommel. The seat is quite wide, and overall the saddle is rather heavy. Indeed, it is notable among medieval Japanese saddles for being unusually grand and substantial.

The stirrups, which are of the *shitanaga* (long footrest) type, are made of iron with a wooden insert for the tread; they are finished with black lacquer and have red lacquer on the interior surfaces. Although they swell at front, their overall shape is slender.

ST

## 191.

## *Kura* (saddle) with blossoming cherry trees

重要文化財 桜螺鈿鞍 一背

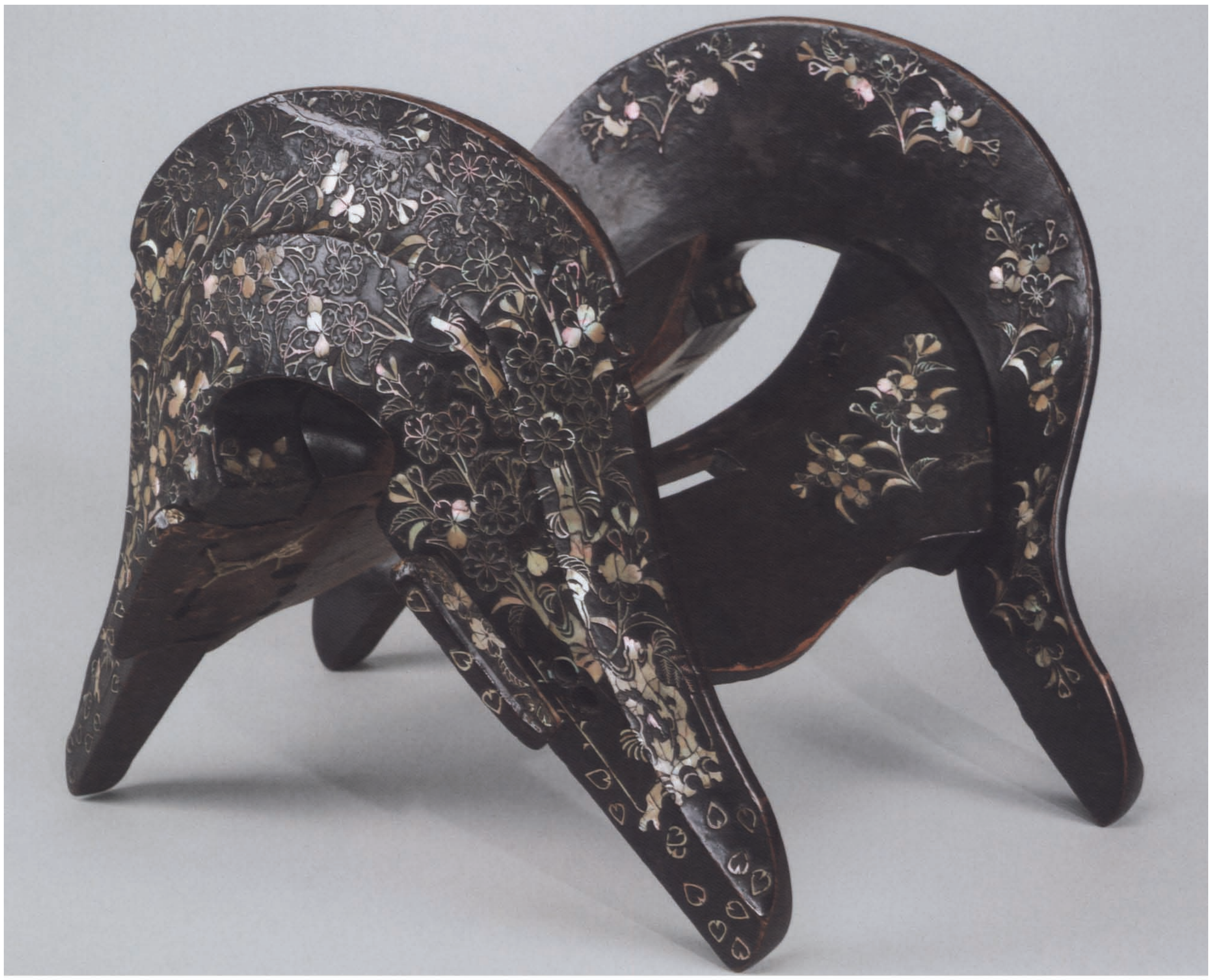
Kamakura period, 13th century
Wood, lacquer, and mother-of-pearl
Pommel: 30 x 36.1 cm (11⅞ x 14¼ in.)
Cantle: 32.4 x 45.4 cm (12¾ x 17⅞ in.)
L. of side bars, 41.5 cm (16⅜ in.)
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo
**Important Cultural Property**

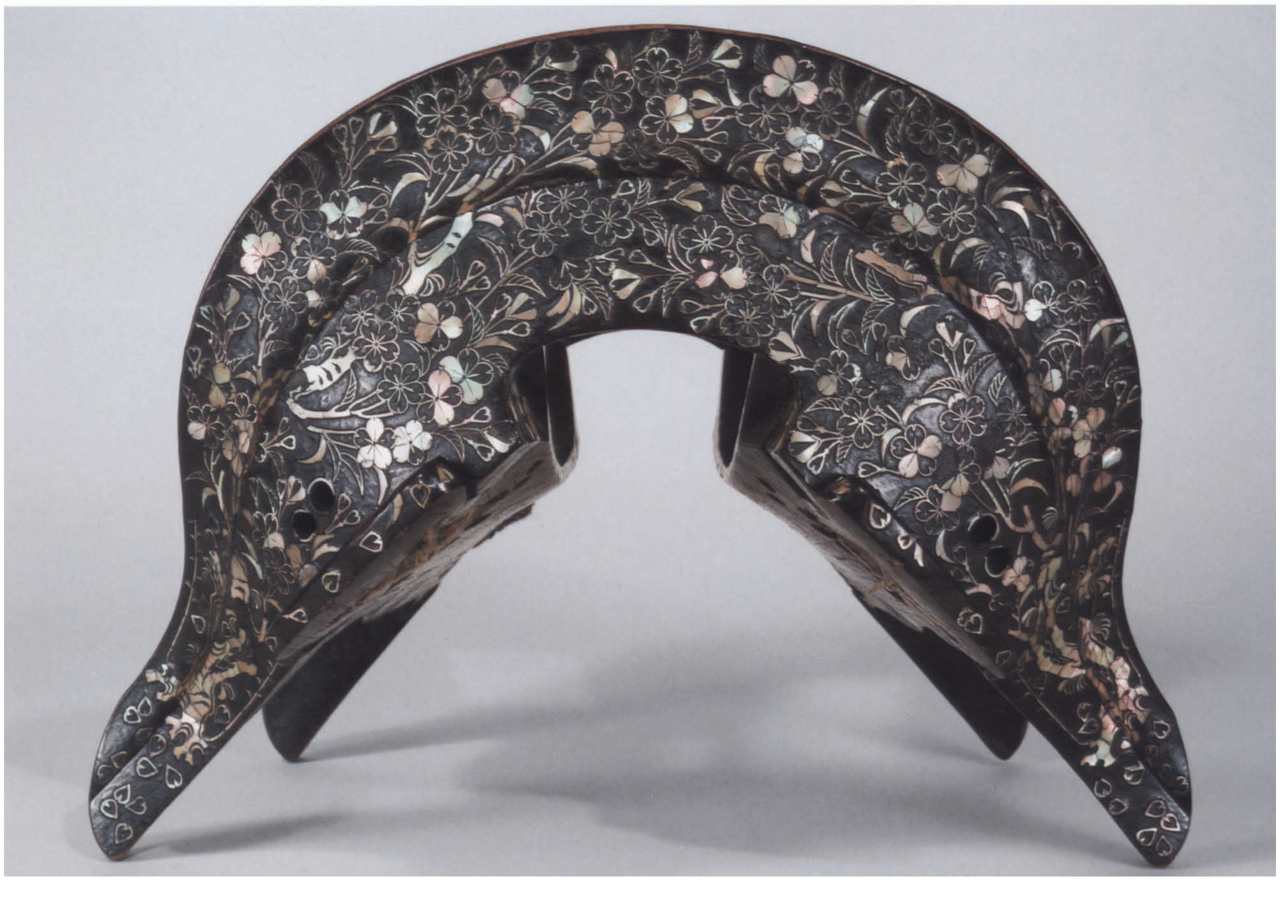
The cherry blossom motif has been used since ancient times as a symbol of Japan. This saddle, among the oldest craft objects on which the design is used, represents the pinnacle of a technique of shell inlay developed during the Kamakura period. Such saddles were made either for military use by high-ranking samurai or for dedication to a religious institution. The striking ornamentation of this notably elegant example is among the most flamboyant found on Japanese saddles.

The outer surfaces of both the pommel (*maewa*) and cantle (*shizuwa*) comprise two stages: the *umi* (top) and the *iso* (the lower section that protrudes out). At the top of the pommel are two indentations cut into either shoulder called the *tegata*, which were meant to be grasped with the hands when mounting the horse. Saddles with these characteristics are found in Japan beginning in the Kamakura period, and they continued as the most common form of saddle well into the Edo period. In this Kamakura-period example, the pommel and cantle are made of oak, and the side bars (*igi*) are made of *sawaguri*, a form of wild chestnut. The profile of the top of the pommel (*yamagata*) is rather high and round, while the undercut portion (*suhama gata*) is deeply carved, with the *tegata* rather low on the shoulders. The pommel is somewhat thin in section, so that the difference in thickness between the *umi* and *iso* is relatively small, characteristic of the type.

The saddle is laquered black overall, and the surfaces of the pommel and cantle are covered with symmetrical designs of flowering cherry boughs made in mother-of-pearl inlay that extend down the legs (*tsumasaki*). Boughs of cherry blossoms are also scattered over the inner surfaces. Toward the center are large, mature branches, each with blossoms and fallen petals made of shell inlay scattered below. The same motifs are also found on the two side bars. The shell used for the mother-of-pearl inlay (*raden*) is that of the *yakogai*, or "green snail," a marine species belonging to the Turbinidae family. Although most of the petals and boughs are formed by outlines traced in fine inlay, some of the blossoms were made using whole pieces of shell. Both types of inlay are skillfully arranged across the curved surfaces to create a colorful effect that is rich in variation as well as three-dimensionality. The saddle was a hereditary possession of the Asano family, daimyo of Hiroshima.

ST





## 192.

## *Kura* (saddle) and *abumi* (stirrups) with reed motifs

## 重要文化財 芦穂蒔絵鞍·鐙 一具

Momoyama period, 16th century
Saddle: wood, lacquer, and gold *maki-e*
27.5 × 29.5 cm (10⅞ × 11⅝ in.)
Stirrups: iron, wood, lacquer, and gold *maki-e*
29.5 × 26.2 cm (11⅝ × 10⅜ in.)
Inscribed on underside of right side bar:
文安二九月日 *BUNAN NI KUGATSU HI* (a day in the ninth month of the Bunan era [1446])
Tokyo National Museum
**Important Cultural Property**

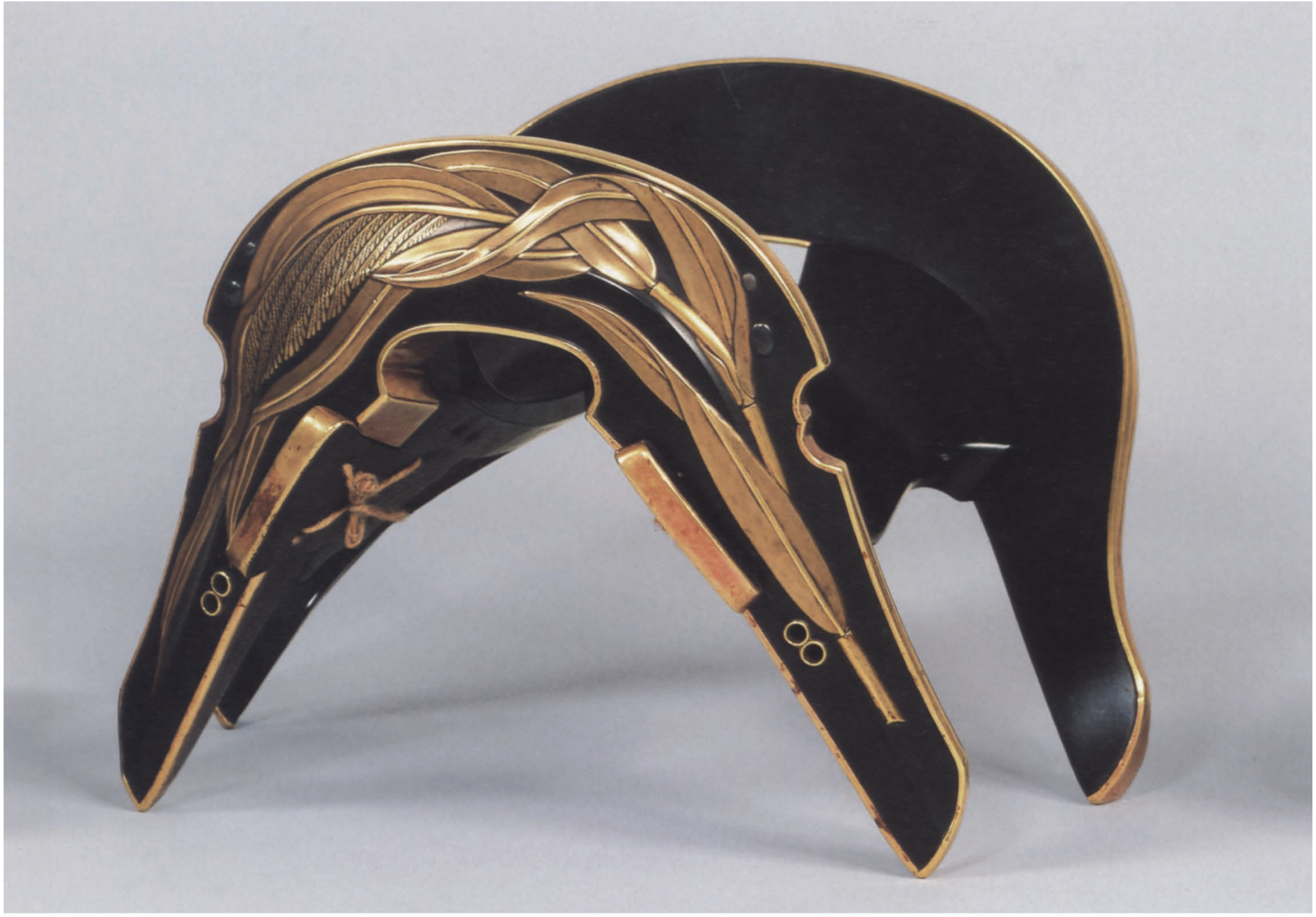
The splendid decoration on the exterior surfaces of this set of saddle and stirrups, in particular the boldly curving lines and copious use of gold and silver, exemplifies the superb *maki-e* work of the Momoyama period. The set was reputedly owned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of the warriors who helped unify Japan.

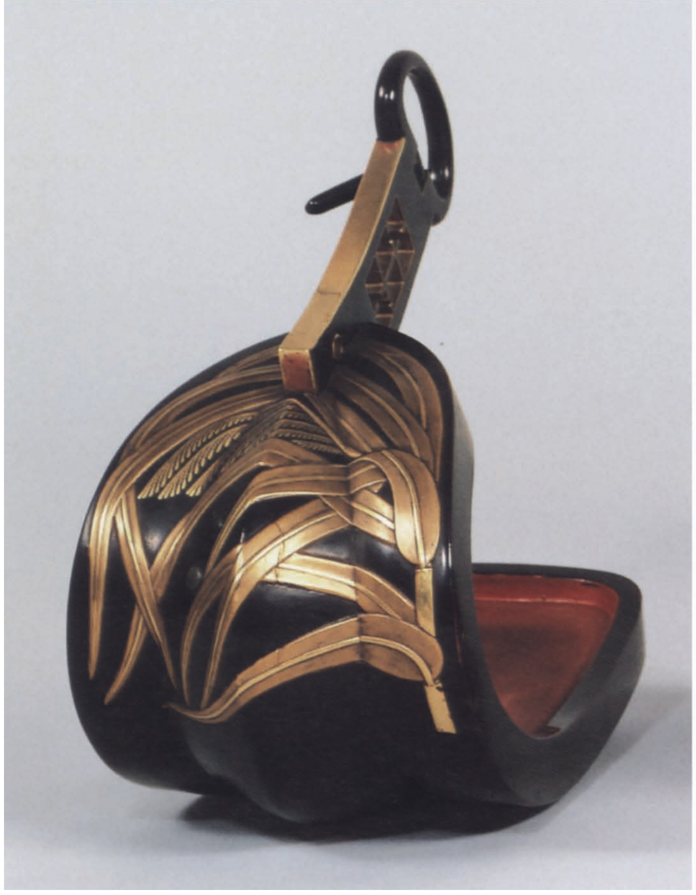
The saddle is associated with a preparatory drawing of a pommel and cantle signed and dated (ca. 1577) by Kanō Eitoku (1543–1590). The inscription on the drawing includes a note that "Hideyoshi" ordered the saddle to be ready in the new year: the reason that the saddle is believed to have been used by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. From this evidence as well as from the inscription beneath the side bar, it seems clear that the *maki-e* decoration was applied sometime in the Momoyama period to an extant, older saddle.

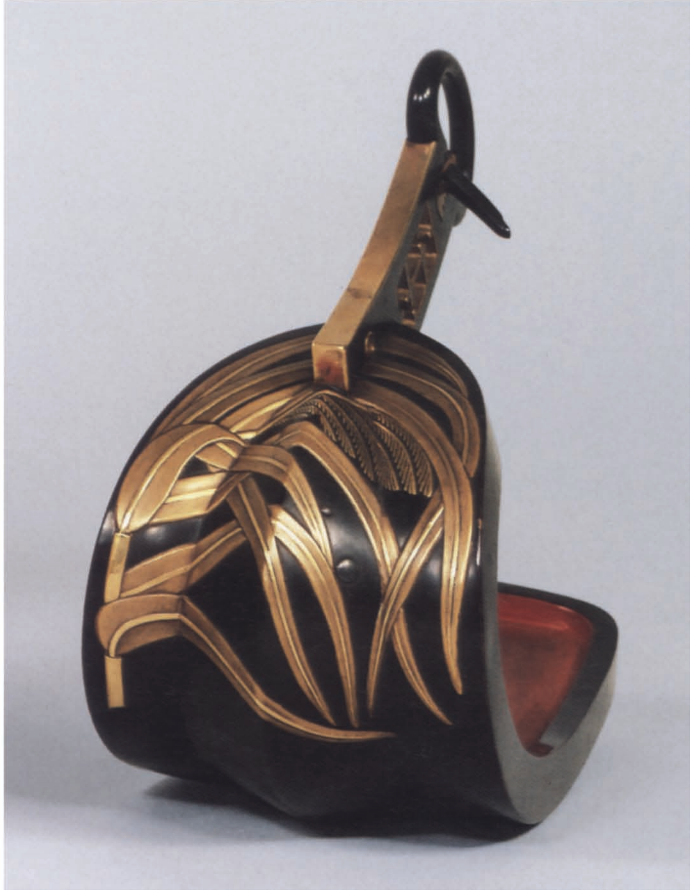
The saddle is made of chestnut wood. The profile of the *yamagata* (the top portion of the pommel) is rather low, and the *suhama* (the cut-away portion in the middle of the bottom of the pommel) is correspondingly small. The cantle has a shallow curvature, and the two side bars are somewhat narrow, so that the seat, too, is narrow: altogether a typical shape for saddles made at this time.

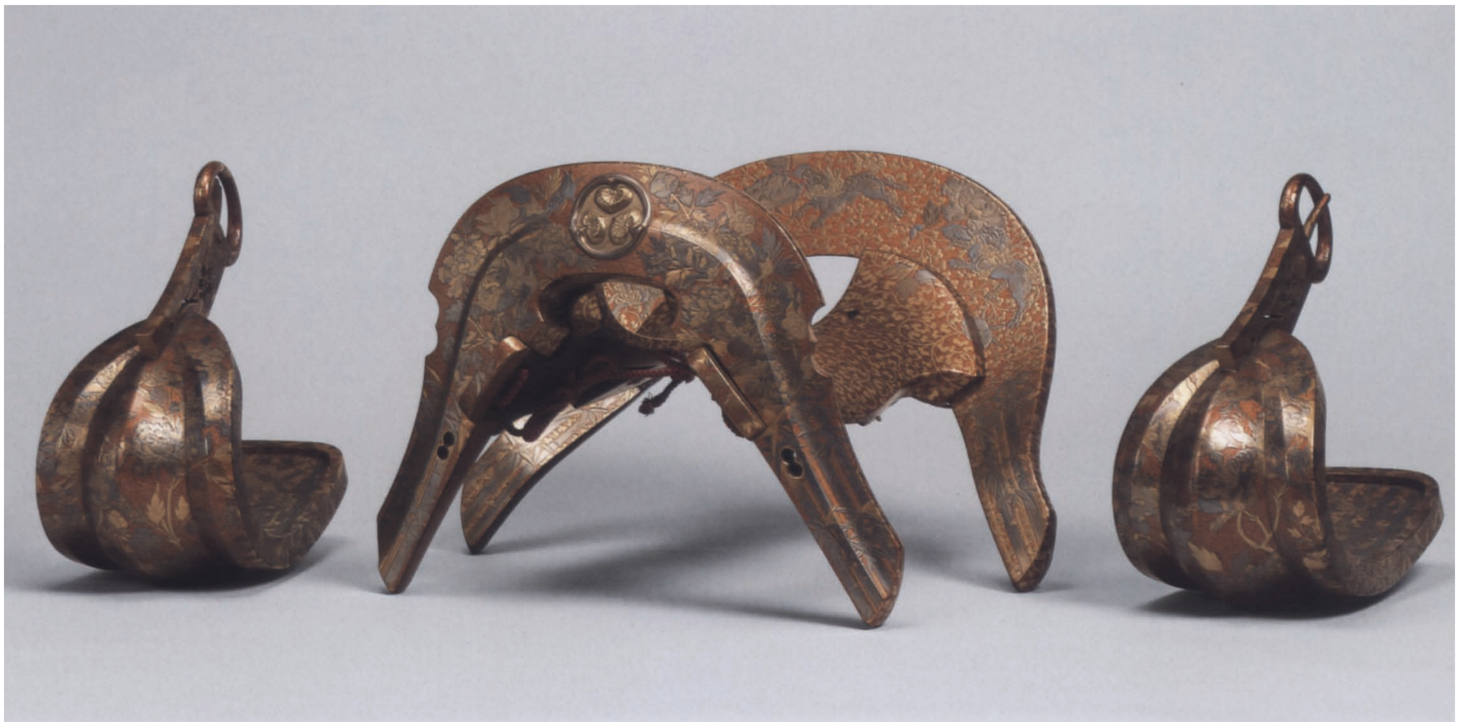
The entire saddle is lacquered black, with the outer surfaces of the pommel and cantle built up and finished with *takamaki-e* (high-relief lacquer). *Kanagai* (thin gold sheet) was used to make the stems and veins of the leaves; the tassels were finished with *hiramaki-e* (flat lacquer) and *kanagai*. Large, roundly carved dewdrops made of silver are applied to the reeds at left and right, and gold edging (*fukurin*) is applied around the pommel from the top to the feet.

The stirrups, made of iron with wooden inserts for the treads, are lacquered black on the exterior and vermilion on the interior. They are of the *shitanaga* (long footrest) type and swell at the front, known as the *hato-mune*, or "pigeon breast." Each is decorated on the front with reed motifs matching the saddle, and they are nearly symmetrical in design. ST









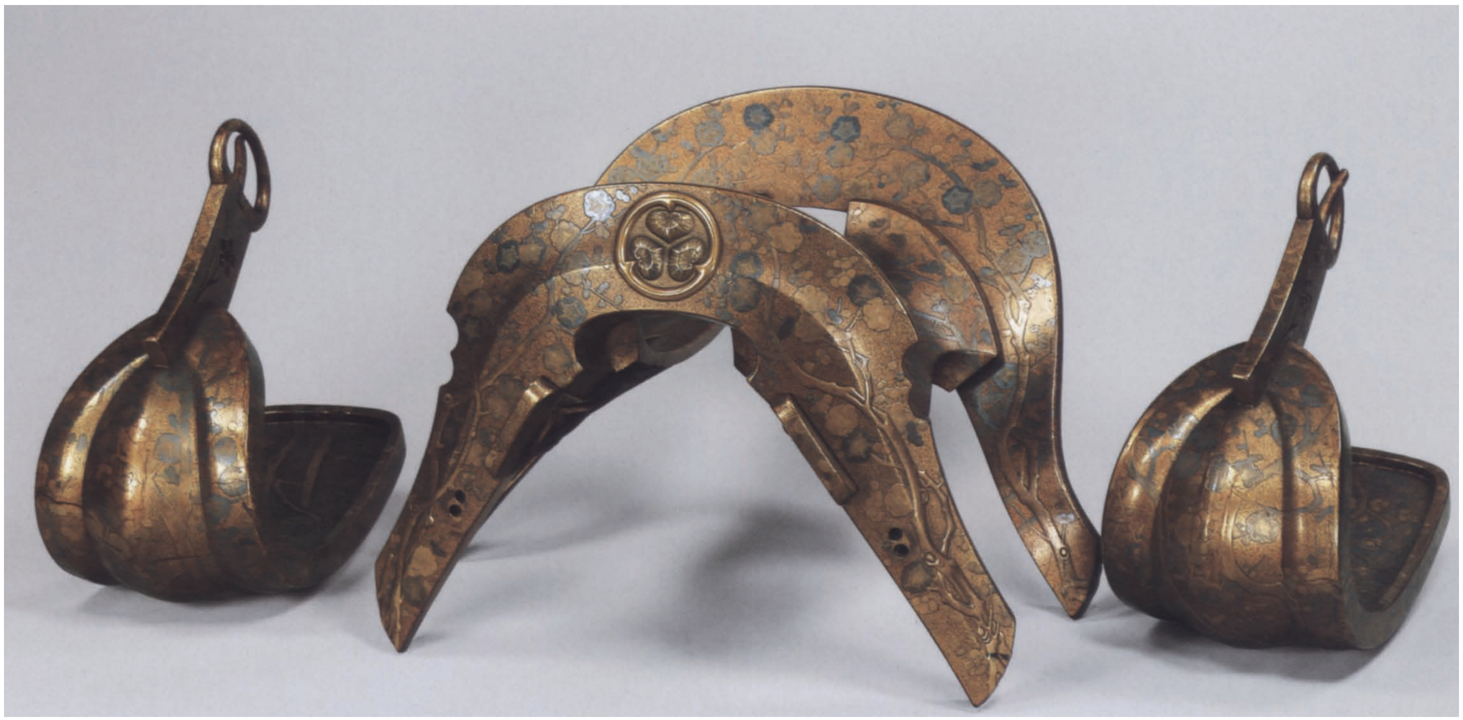
**193.**

## *Kura* (saddle) and *abumi* (stirrups) with *shishi* (Chinese lions) and peonies

## 獅子牡丹蒔絵鞍·鐙

Edo period, 1710
Saddle: wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
Stirrups: iron, wood, and lacquer
Pommel: H. 27.7 cm (10⅞ in.)
Cantle: H. 26.8 cm (10½ in.)
Seat: L. 31 cm (12¼ in.)
Stirrups: H. 27.1 cm (10⅝ in.); W. 12.9 cm (5⅛ in.); L. 29.5 cm (11⅝ in.)
Ōsaka Municipal Museum of Art

The saddle has an overall *nashiji* ground—lacquer containing gold flakes, said to resemble "pearskin"—with high-relief hollyhock *mon* (insignia) at the center of the pommel and cantle. Surrounding the *mon* from the left and right are four *shishi* (Chinese lions) with peonies. Scrolling bamboo (*karakusa*) extends down the feet of both pommel and cantle. A different *karakusa* design fills the inner surfaces of the pommel, cantle, and seat; a more scattered design of bamboo, *shishi*, and peonies decorates the outer surfaces. The *karakusa* is made with gold; the other motifs are executed in slightly raised gold and silver *maki-e* and applied *kirigane* (gold leaf), among other decorative techniques. The date of the seventh year of the Hōei era (1710) and a *kaō* (monogram) are incised under the seat, and it is assumed that the saddle and stirrups were made about that time. ST



### 194.

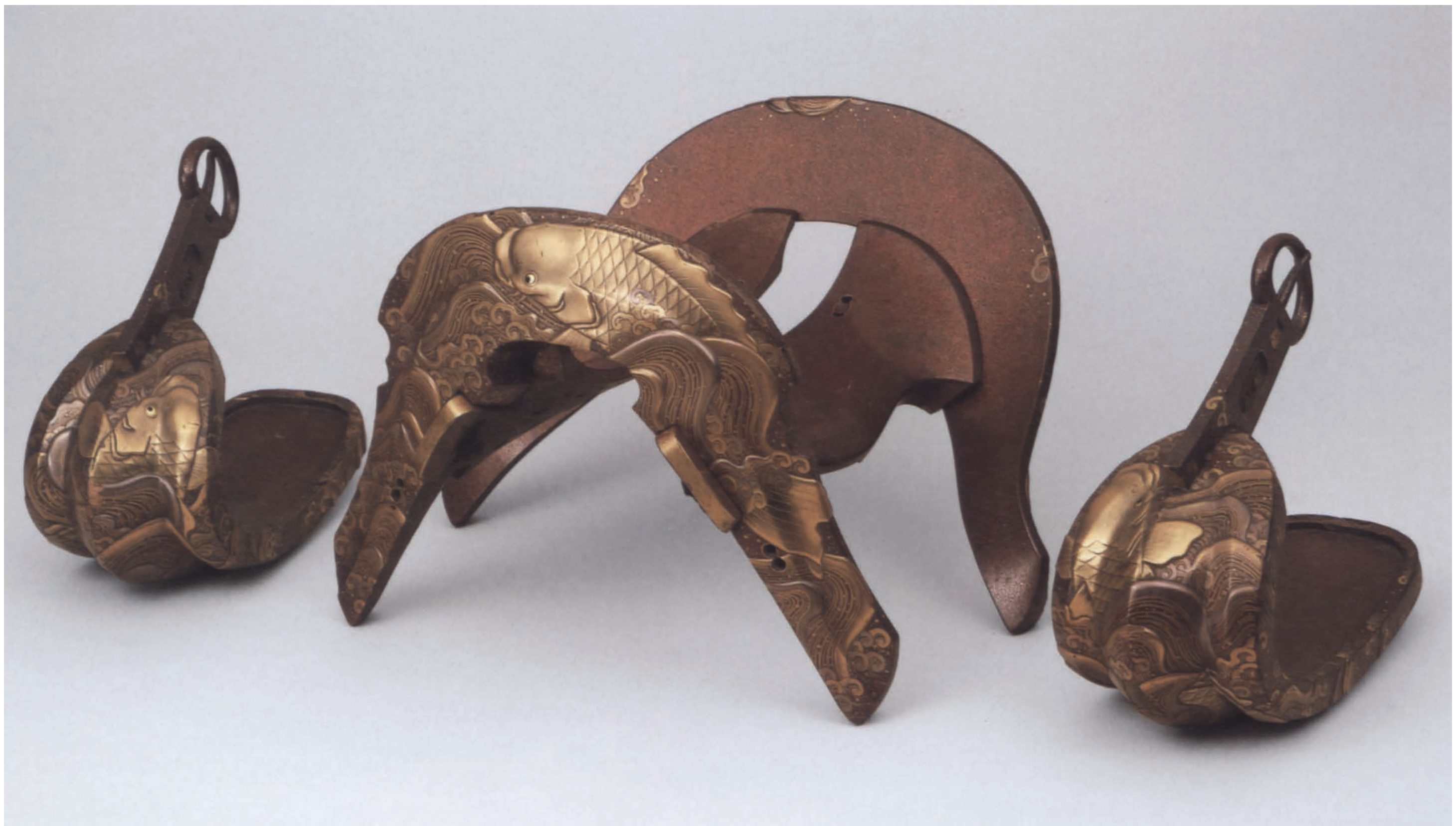
### *Kura* (saddle) and *abumi* (stirrups) with plum blossoms

### 梅枝蒔絵鞍·鐙

Edo period, 1706
Saddle: wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
Stirrups: iron, wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
H. of pommel, 27.3 cm (10¾ in.); H. of cantle, 26.9 cm (10⅝ in.); L. of side bars, 37.6 cm (14¾ in.); L. of stirrups, 26.1 cm (10¼ in.)
Inscribed beneath side bars: 宝永三年七月日 *HŌEI SANNEN SHICHIGATSU HI* (a day in the seventh month in the third year of the Hōei era [1706])
Tokyo National Museum

The interior and exterior surfaces of the pommel and cantle, the side bars of the saddle, and the outer surfaces of the stirrups are lacquered with a *nashiji* ground (see cat. no. 193). Plum blossoms are luxuriously depicted in gold and silver *takamaki-e* (high-relief lacquer). In addition, at the center of the outer surfaces of the pommel and cantle are large hollyhock *mon*, the insignia of the Tokugawa family, in gold *takamaki-e*. Most Japanese saddles are undated. Here the date inscribed beneath the side bars, the equivalent of 1706, makes this set a particularly valuable reference point.

ST



### 195.

## *Kura* (saddle) and *abumi* (stirrups) with carp among waves in *maki-e*

## 鯉文様 鞍·鐙

Edo period, 19th century
Saddle: wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
Stirrups: iron, wood, lacquer, and *maki-e*
H. of saddle, 27.6 cm (10⅞ in.); H. of stirrups, 24.8 cm (9¾ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

This matching set of saddle and stirrups is among the finest of the decorative saddles from the mid- to late Edo period. It is made of wood and lacquered overall; the pommel, cantle, and side bars have a *nashiji* ground. The lively swimming carp depicted among large swirling waves in gold and silver *hiramaki-e* and *takamaki-e* (flat and high-relief *maki-e* lacquer, respectively) overlap onto the inner part of the *yamagata* (top portion) of the pommel and cantle. The set was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family.

ST

### 196.

## Lacquered double box for a *tantō* (dagger)

## 重要文化財 蒔絵二重短刀箱

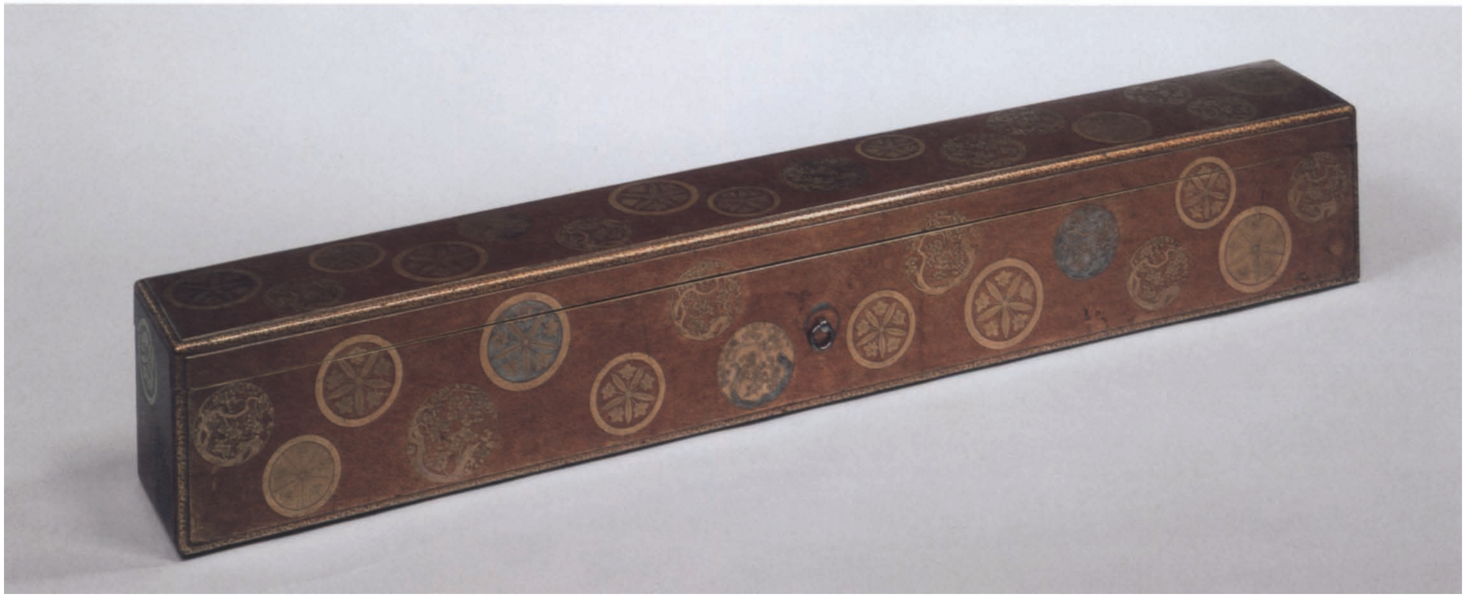
Momoyama period, 16th century
Wood, lacquer, and gold
Inner box: 8.3 × 8.8 × 45.1 cm (3¼ × 3½ × 17¾ in.)
Outer box: 13.2 × 11.6 × 47.8 cm (5¼ × 4⅝ × 18⅞ in.)
Homma Museum of Art, Sakata City
**Important Cultural Property**

These sword boxes present an unusual and splendid combination of Japanese and foreign designs. They were made to contain the *tantō* (dagger) called "Shinogi Toshiro," which was bequeathed to Date Masamune (see cat. no. 13) following the death of the great warrior Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598). The rectangular inner box is constructed in the *aikuchi* method, in which the lid fits around a raised inner lip. It is embellished with fifty-seven paulownia *mon* depicted in slightly raised gold *maki-e* in an orderly array over the *roiro* (polished black lacquer) ground. The interior has a scattering of gold and silver chrysanthemum flowers in *hiramaki-e* on a gold *nashiji* ground, and the inner rim has *nanban* (foreign-style) *karakusa* (foliate scrollwork), also in *maki-e*. At the midpoint of the longer sides is a silver ring on a silver base over a gold chrysanthemum-shaped boss.

The outer box is also rectangular, but it is constructed in the *daisashi* method, in which the bottom edge of the lid fits into a slotted rim in the base. It has an overall ground of red lacquer embellished in a diamond pattern (*hishi*) in gold *maki-e* containing chrysanthemums. The paulownia *mon* pattern on the inner box is one of the most common motifs in the *Kōdai-ji*-style lacquer fashionable during the Momoyama period, whereas the diamond shapes on the outer box are believed to be based on imported textiles.

ST

196



197

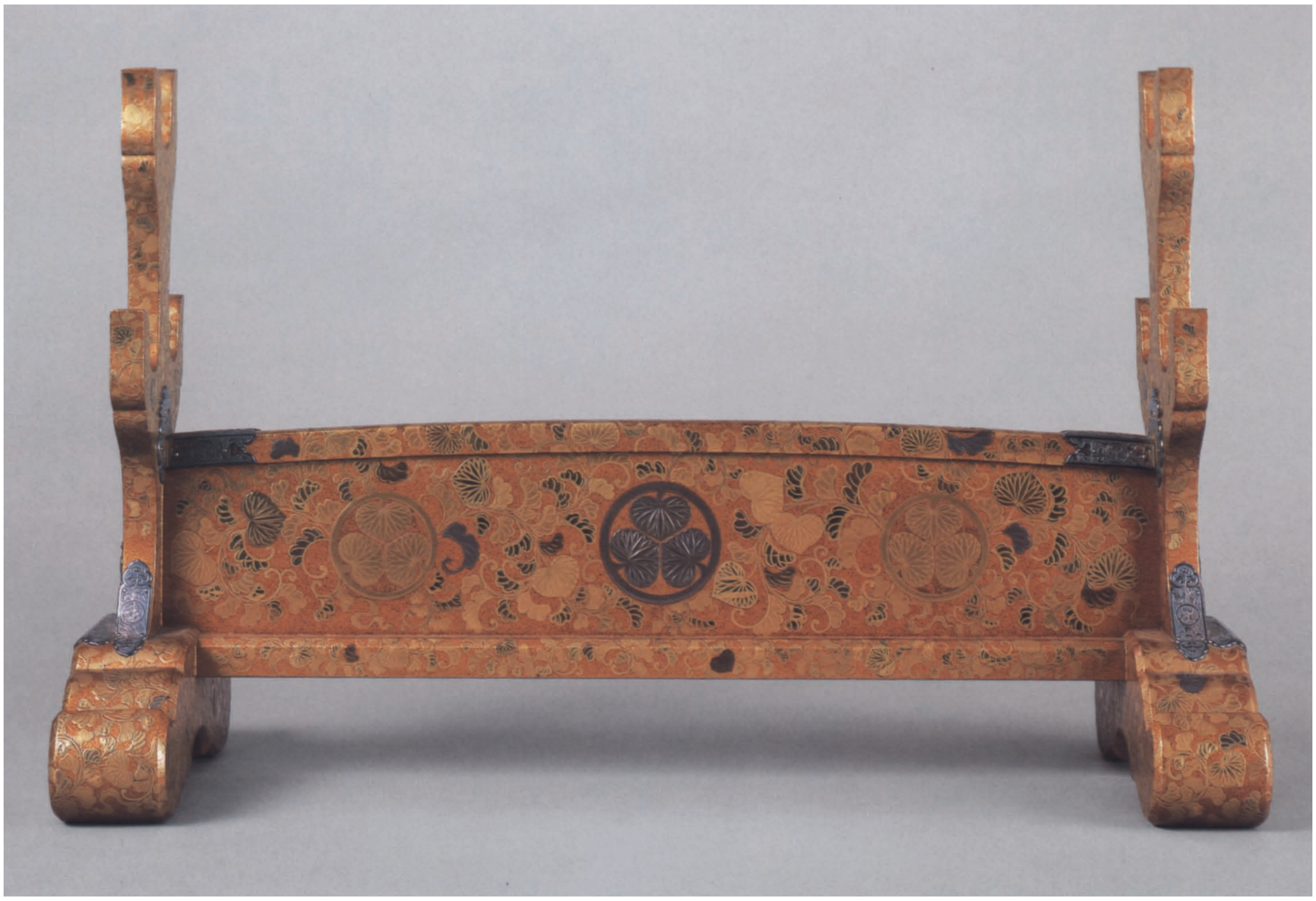
## 197.

### Gold *nashiji*-lacquered sword box with gentian and plum-blossom *mon* (insignia)

### 梨地笹竜胆梅枝紋蒔絵太刀箱

Edo period, late 18th century
Wood, lacquer, and gold
18.2 × 16.1 × 121.6 cm (7⅛ × 6⅜ × 47⅞ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

Daimyo generally housed their swords in chests of four or five drawers, each containing five or six swords. Particularly famous swords from ancient times, or swords that were of special importance to the family, might be stored individually in a box such as this one. It was made for a *tachi* by Fukuoka Ichimonji Sadazane in the possession of the Chikugo Kurume Arima family. The *mon* (insignia) of gentian and flowering plum blossoms are depicted on the metal fittings as well as in gold and silver *maki-e* across the entire surface of the box, which is covered in fine *nashiji* gold lacquer. Judging from the style of the *maki-e*, the box is believed to date from the mid-Edo period. In addition to *nashiji*, some sword boxes were lacquered black overall and embellished with family *mon* in *maki-e* or with written characters: the Momoyama-period double box for the *tantō* known as "Shinogi Toshiro" (cat. no. 196) is a particularly luxurious example. HK



**198.**

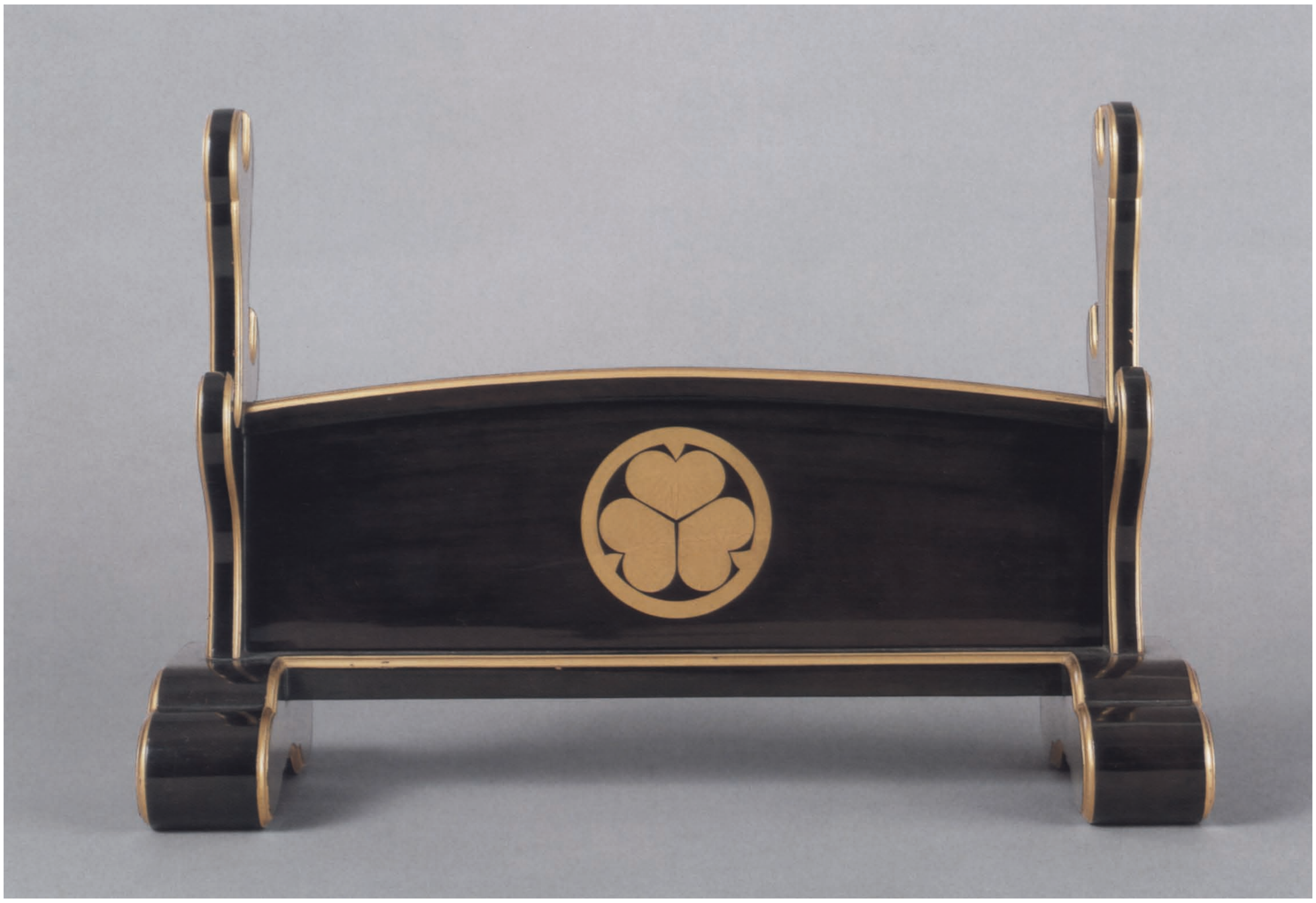
## Sword stand with scrolling hollyhock vines and hollyhock *mon*

梨地葵紋葵唐草蒔絵刀架

Edo period, 18th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, and *maki-e*
30.9 × 18.5 × 54 cm (12⅛ × 7¼ × 21¼ in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

This sword stand is richly decorated in *maki-e* lacquer. The *nashiji* ground, made of lacquer containing gold flakes, has *aoi karakusa* (scrolling hollyhock foliage) in gold *maki-e* and *kanagai* (thin gold sheet) along with large hollyhock *mon*. The main joints have silver fittings that are also decorated with hollyhock *mon* and scrolling. There are places for three swords: one on top, and two on the vertical side pieces at front and back. The stand was handed down in the Owari Tokugawa family.

ST



**199.**

Black-lacquered sword stand with hollyhock *mon*

黒漆葵紋蒔絵刀架

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Edo period, 18th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, and *maki-e*
28 × 17.6 × 50.9 cm (11 × 6⅞ × 20 in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

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The sword stand, used to display mounted *tachi* and *katana*, was considered a piece of *okudogu*, or "indoor equipment," part of the domestic, everyday effects of the samurai. This fine, black-lacquered example, notable for its simple but elegant design, has a single large *aoi mon* (hollyhock insignia) depicted in the center in gold *maki-e*. The edges are embellished in gold *ikakeji*: a dense ground of sprinkled gold dust. There are places for three swords: one on top, and two on the vertical side pieces at front and back. It was handed down in the Owari Tokugawa family.

ST

## 200.

### Asai Nagamasa

### 重要文化財 浅井長政像

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Momoyama period, 1589
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
99.5 × 43 cm (39⅛ × 16⅞ in.)
Jimyoin Temple, Wakayama Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

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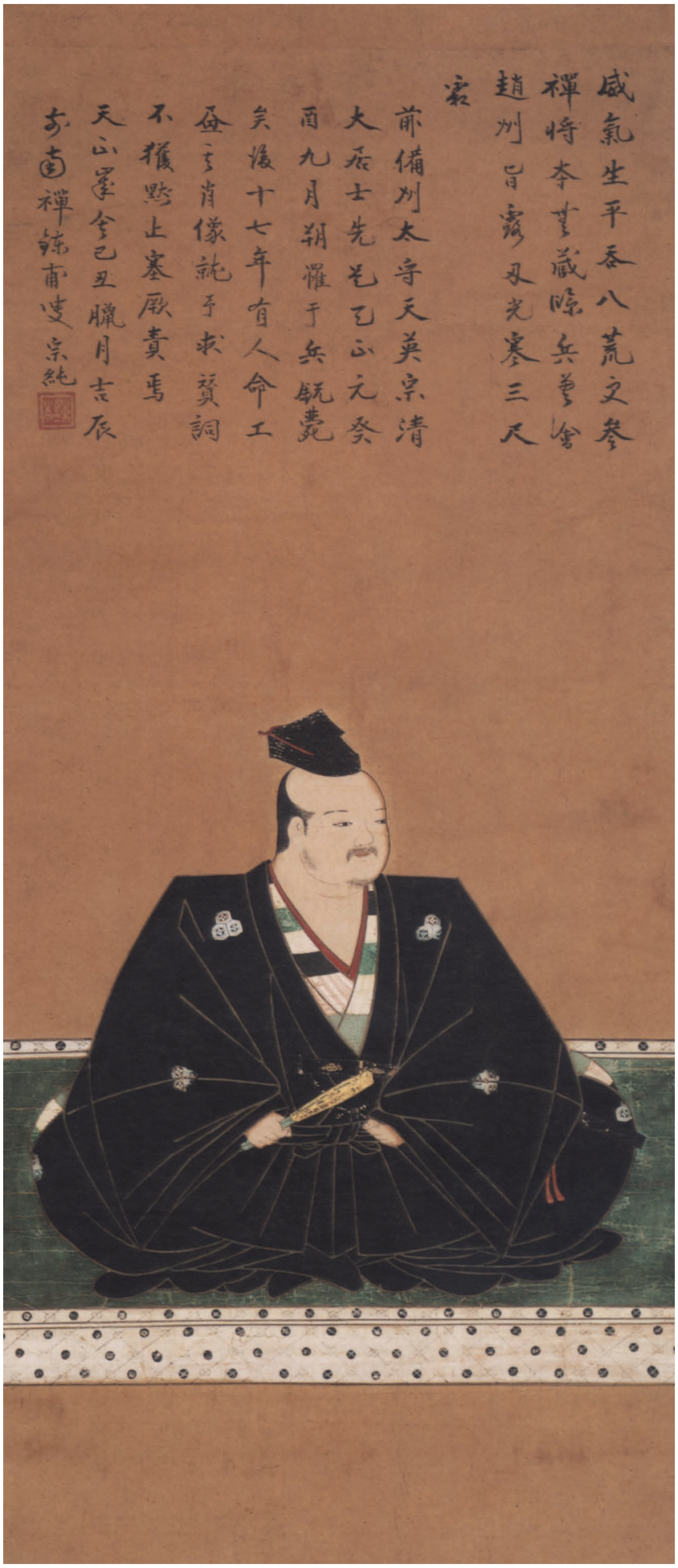
Asai Nagamasa (1545–1573) inherited the estate of his family at the relatively young age of sixteen and ruled over a domain that included about half of Omi province, in present-day Shiga Prefecture. He was forced to commit suicide in his own stronghold, Odani Castle, after a sworn friend, Asakura, was ruined by Nagamasa's brother-in-law, the powerful warlord Oda Nobunaga. This portrait shows Nagamasa seated on tatami matting wearing a samurai *eboshi* (formal cap), a black *hitatare* (a long jacket or overkimono), and a black, white, and green striped inner garment in combination with a red *tsuku* (a type of undergarment). He is holding a fan in his right hand. The inscription at the top of the portrait indicates that it was painted in the seventeenth year of the Tenshō era (1589), on the seventeenth anniversary of Nagamasa's death. ST


威氣生平吞八荒文參
禪將李廣藏蹤兵書淪
趙州旨露及光寒三尺
霜
前備州太守天英宗清
大居士先考己亡元癸
酉九月朔罹于兵燹
矣後十七年有人命工
画之肖像就予求賛詞
不獲點上塞厥責焉
天正星舍己丑臘月吉辰
前南禪餘甫叟宗純

## 201.

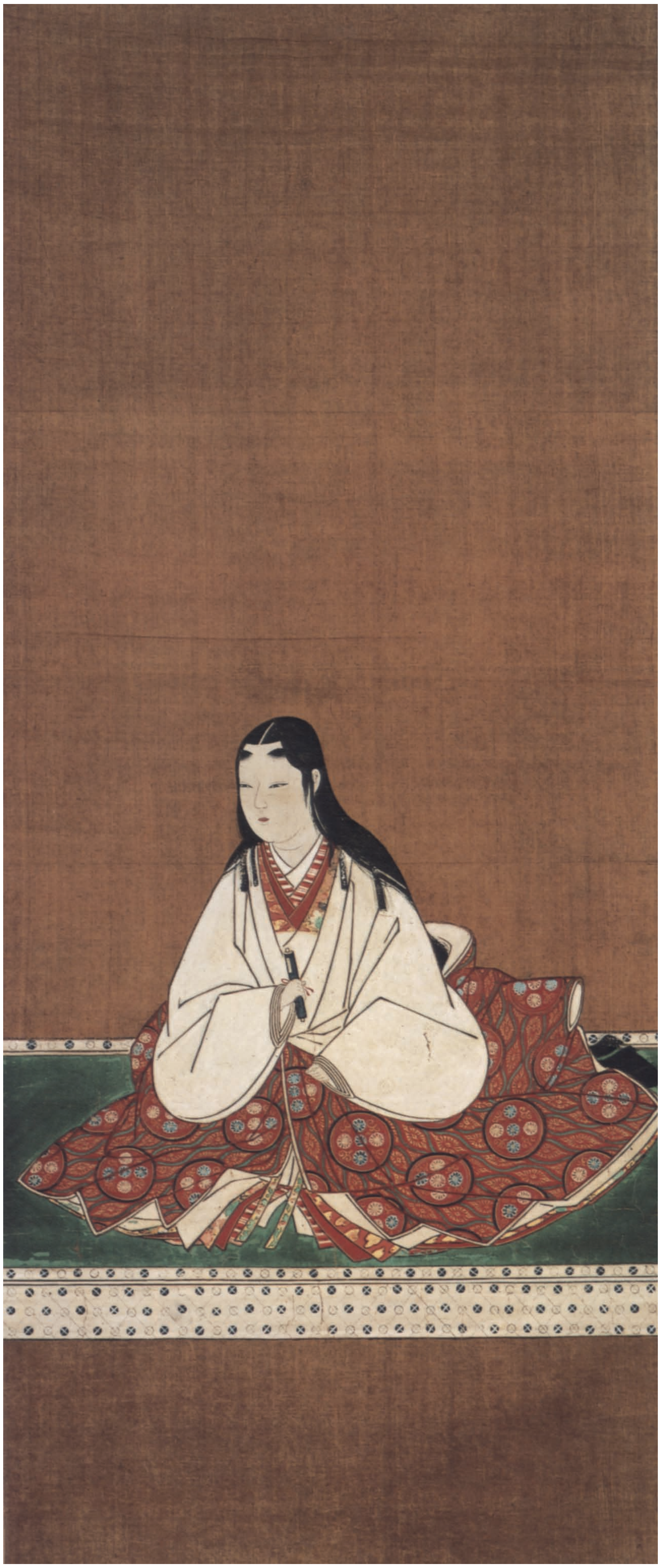
## Oichi no Kata, wife of Asai Nagamasa

## 重要文化財 浅い井長政夫人像

Momoyama period, 16th century
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
96 × 40.9 cm (37¾ × 16⅛ in.)
Jimyoin Temple, Wakayama Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

Asai Nagamasa's wife, known as "Oichi no Kata," or Lady Oichi (d. 1583), was the younger sister of the warlord Oda Nobunaga and a renowned beauty. After her husband was forced to commit suicide following the fall of Odani Castle, in 1573 (see cat. no. 200), she fled with her three daughters and was later remarried to Shibata Katsuie. She ended her turbulent life with Katsuie in the eleventh year of the Tenshō era (1583), however, after his castle, too, fell to the forces of Nobunaga. This portrait, believed to have been painted at the same time as that of Nagamasa, depicts her in a modest attitude seated on tatami (straw matting) and holding a sutra scroll in her right hand; her left hand is concealed in her sleeve. She wears a white *kosode*-type *kimono* (one with small sleeves) decorated with scattered chrysanthemum designs. Around her waist is an *uchikake* (a long overkimono) with round motifs on a vermilion ground. Her inner garments, arranged in the *katamigawari* style (diagonal across the body), are white, striped, red, and dark orange with clouds and floral patterns.

ST



## 202.

# Ashikaga Yoshiteru

# 重要文化財 足利義輝像

Momoyama period, 1577
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
93.2 × 43.7 cm (36¾ × 17¼ in.)
National Museum of Japanese History,
Chiba Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

Ashikaga Yoshiteru (1536–1565) was the thirteenth shogun of the Muromachi *bakufu* (military government). In this portrait, he wears a *tate-eboshi* (high-fronted court headgear) and a white and crimson *noshime*-style *kosode* (short-sleeved kimono) with a diaphanous, summer-weight *hitatare* (overkimono). *Noshime* refers to a garment in which the sleeves and lower part are striped or latticed in a different color. He holds a *chukei* (a type of fan) in his right hand, and at his waist is a black-lacquered *koshigatana* mounting with gold *menuki* (hilt fittings) decorated with paulownia *mon*, the insignia of the Ashikaga shogunate. From the inscription, we know that the portrait was painted in 1577 to commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of Yoshiteru's death.

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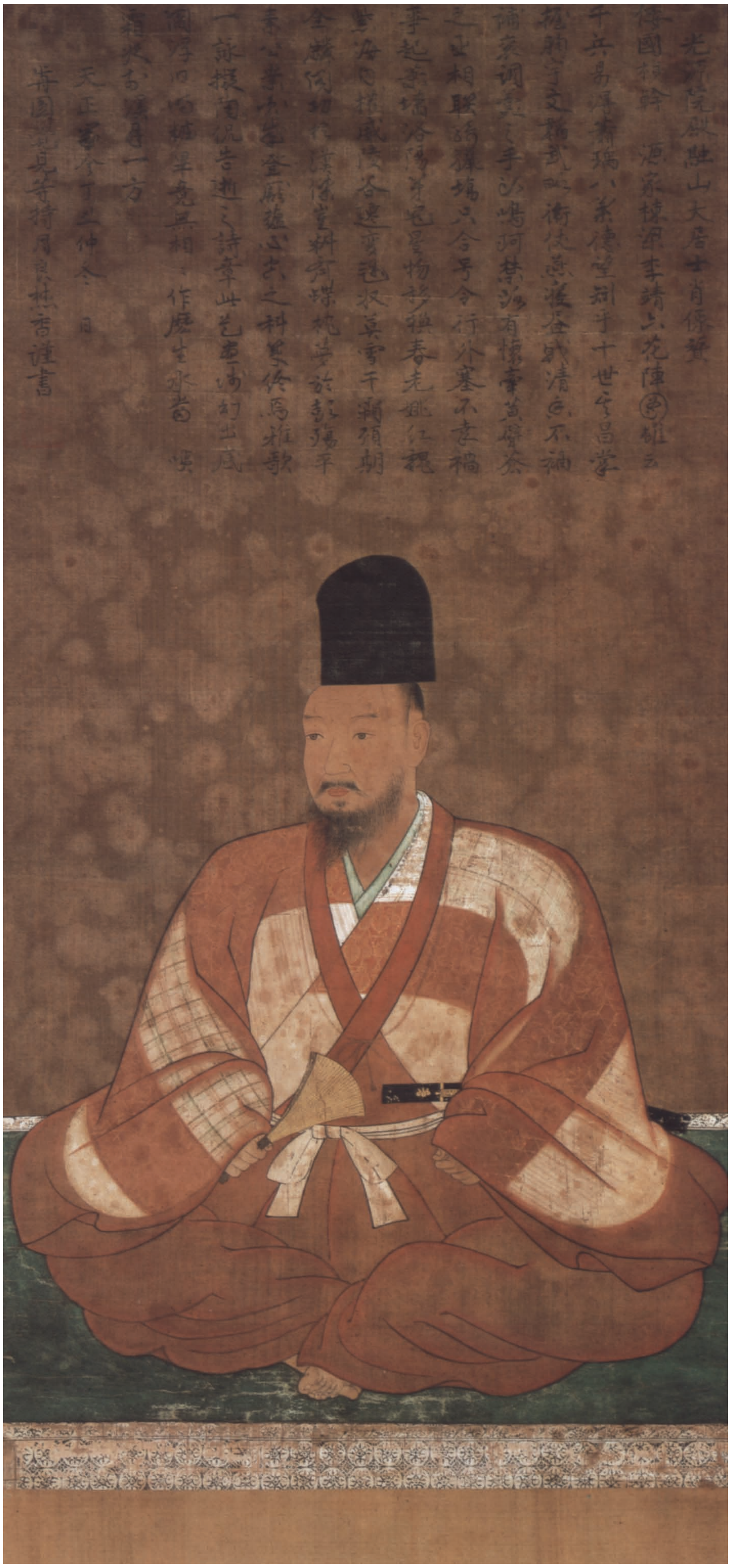

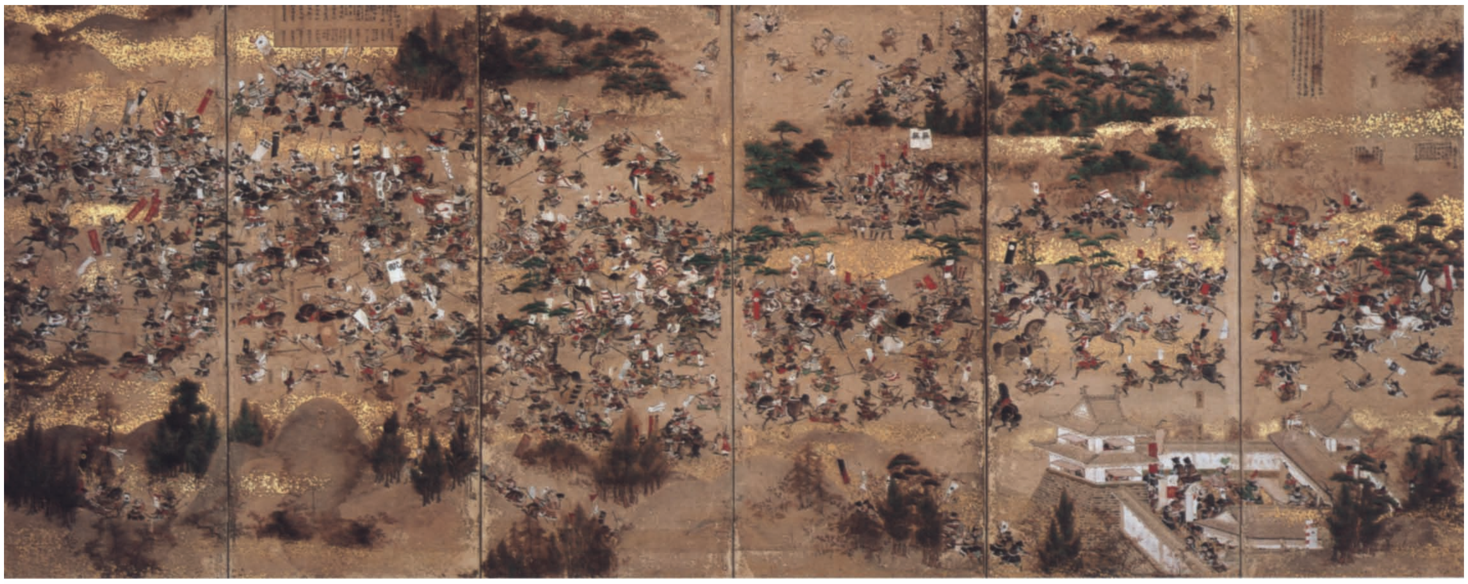

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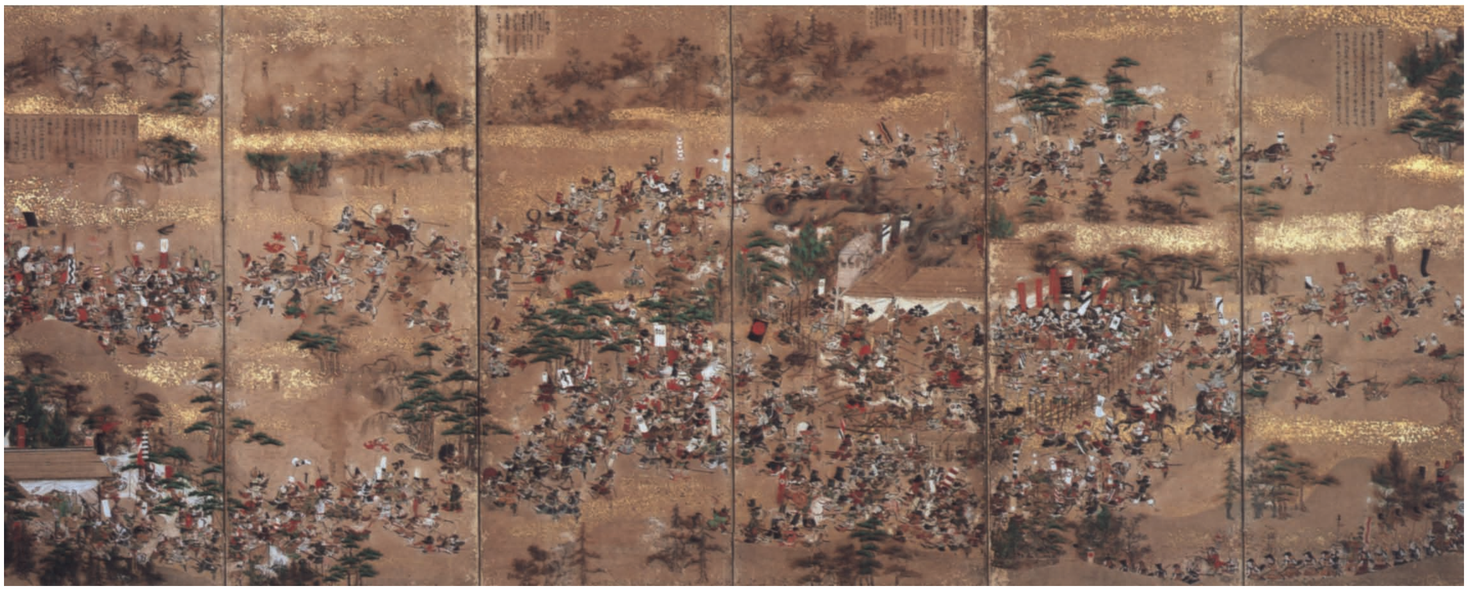


Left

### 203.

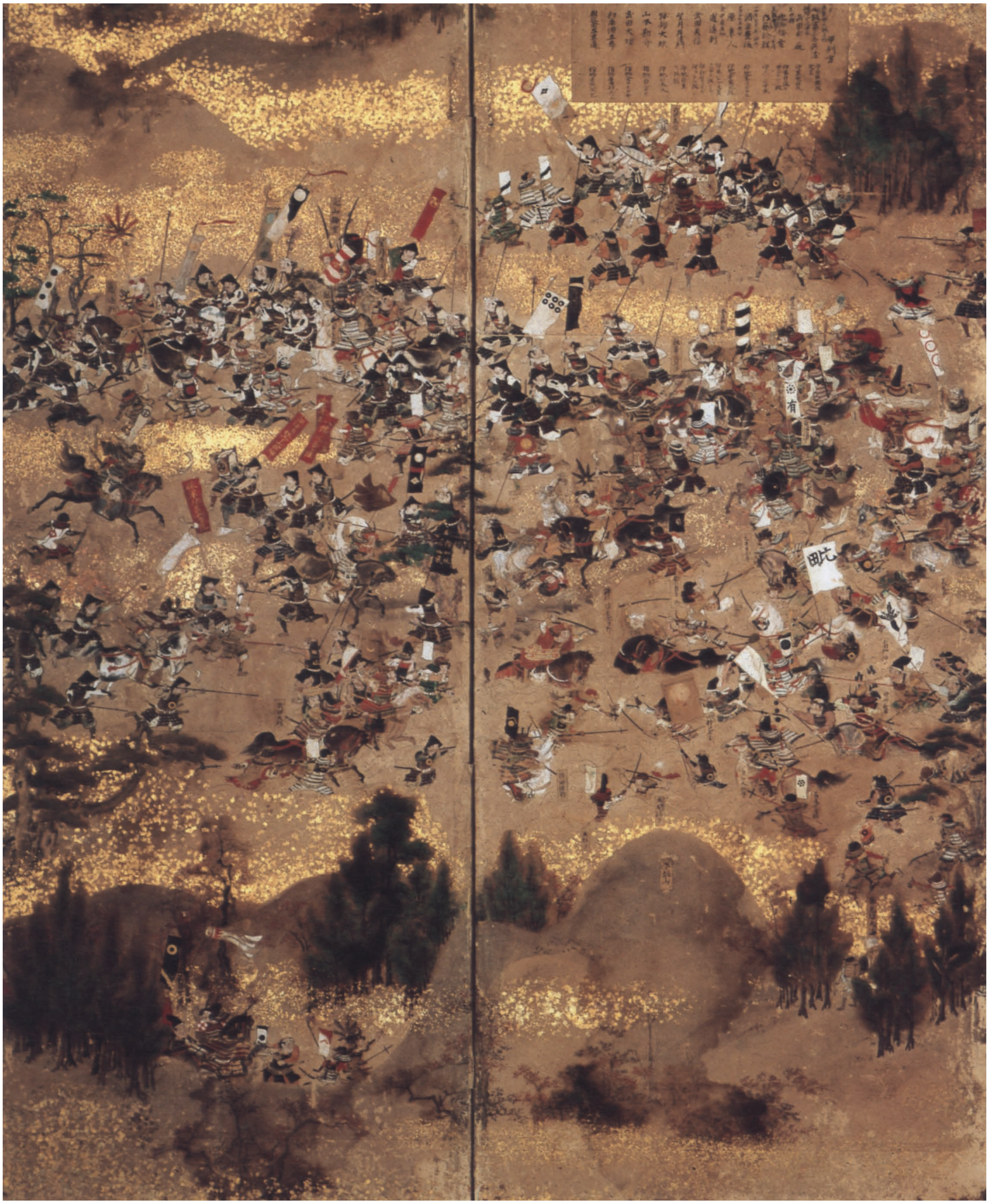
## The Battle of Kawanakajima

川中島合戦図屏風 一双

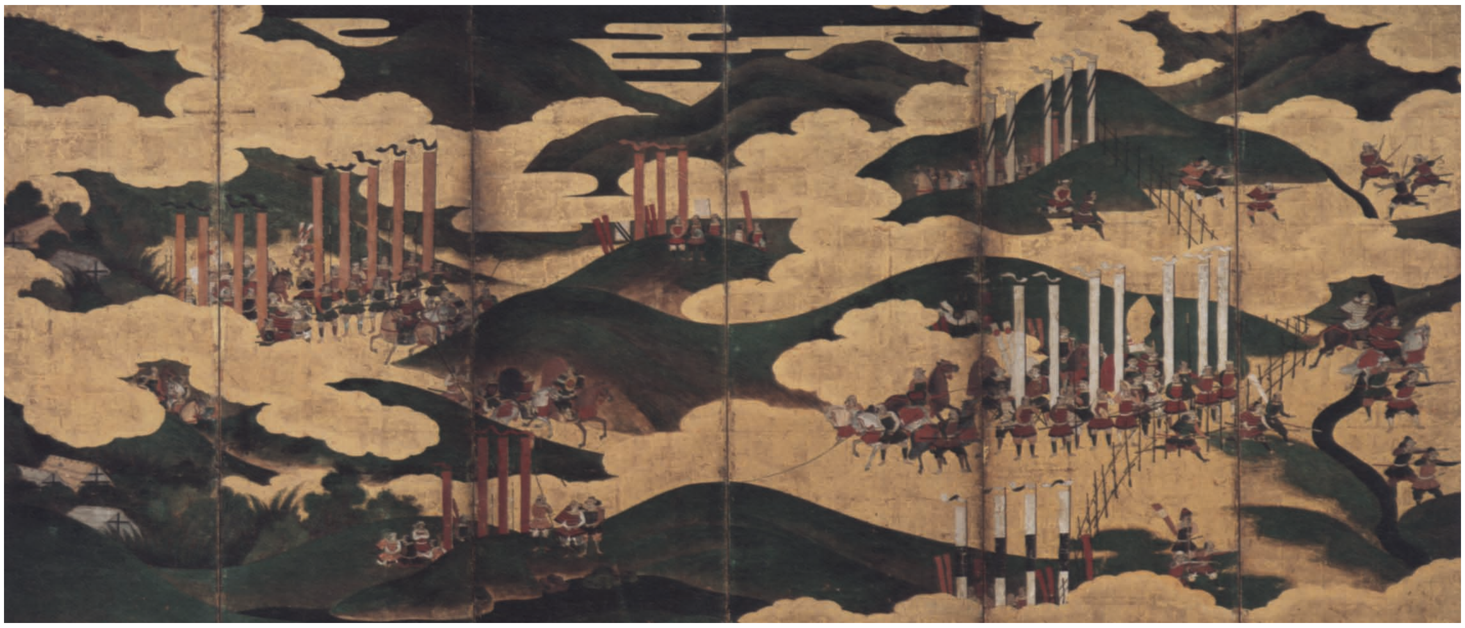
Edo period, 17th century
Pair of six-fold screens: ink, colors, and gold on paper
Right screen: 198.5 × 272.6 cm (78⅛ × 107⅜ in.)
Left screen: 109.2 × 272.7 cm (43 × 107⅜ in.)
Wakayama Prefectural Museum

The series of battles in the sixteenth century between Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen at Kawanakajima, in Shinshū province (present-day Nagano Prefecture), were famous and widely recounted in the past, and in Japan they continue to be so today. Among the tales associated with the conflict, the most celebrated is the episode when Shingen rode into Kenshin's camp and challenged him to single combat. According to historical sources, that encounter took place on the tenth day of the ninth month in the fourth year of the Eiroku era (1561). It is depicted on the fifth leaf of the right screen. The date of 1554, given in the inscription on the right screen, is thus incorrect, probably owing to the fact that the screens were painted many years after the events they depict. Together they present a splendid overall composition in which the protagonists, depicted with fine brushwork, blend into a backdrop of crowds, castle, and fortifications. Gold leaf was effectively employed to represent the sand of the riverbanks and the mist seeping into the battlefield. The pair was commissioned by Tokugawa Yorinobu, first lord of the Kishu *han* (domain), from either a painter of the Kanō school or another artist of similar standing.

IH



Detail of *The Battle of Kawanakajima* (cat. no. 203)



## 204.

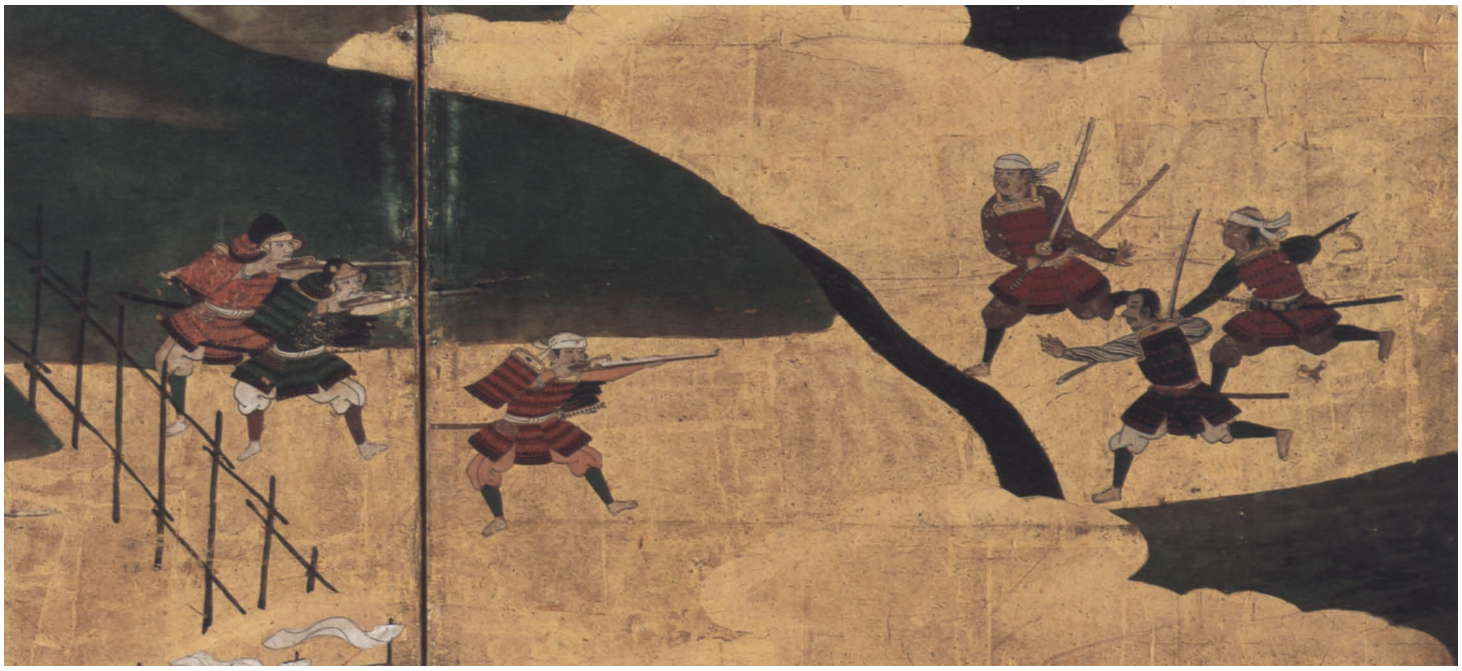
### The Battle of Nagashino

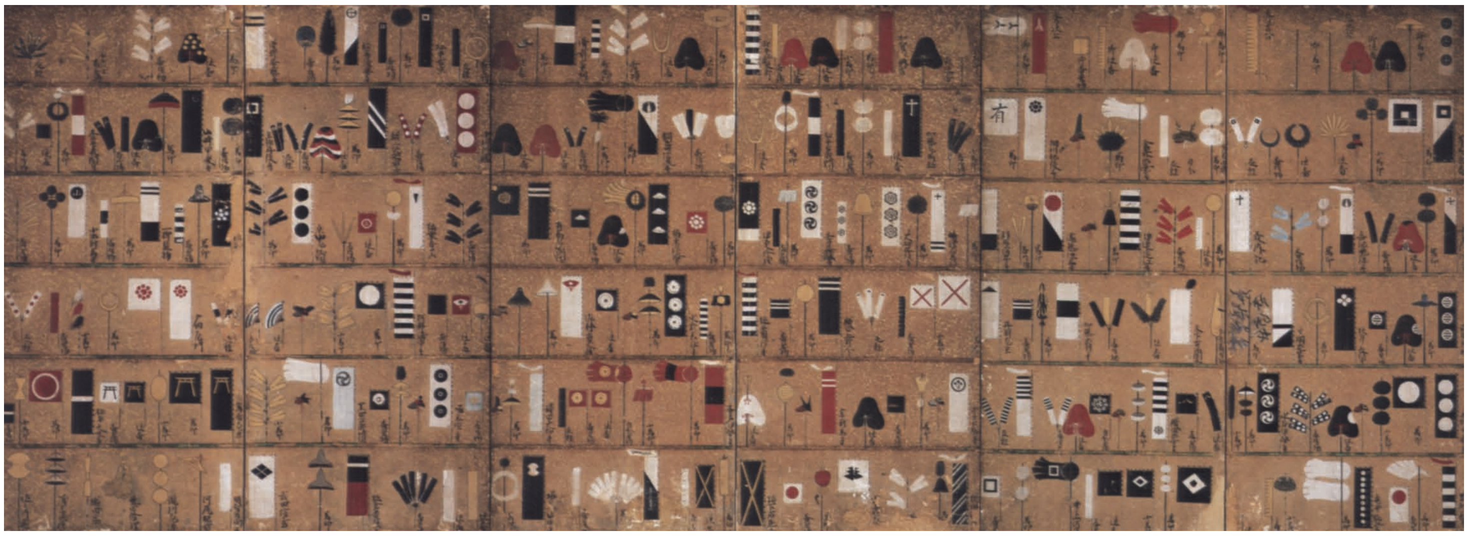
### 長篠合戦図屏風　六曲一隻

Edo period, 17th century
Six-panel folding screen: ink, color, and gold on paper
155.2 × 358 cm (61⅛ × 141 in.)
Nagoya City Museum, Aichi Prefecture

This screen, thought to be the left side of what originally was a pair, is one of the earliest-known depictions of a battle from the Sengoku-jidai, or Age of Wars. It shows the combined forces of the Oda and Tokugawa families facing the Takeda army at the Battle of Nagashino (1575) and includes what are believed to be depictions of the respective headquarters of the warlords Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu. The armies are drawn up in battle lines against a background of low mountains interspersed by the gold ground, in the shape of billowy clouds. The combatants are illustrated at a somewhat large scale and have highly detailed facial expressions.

ST





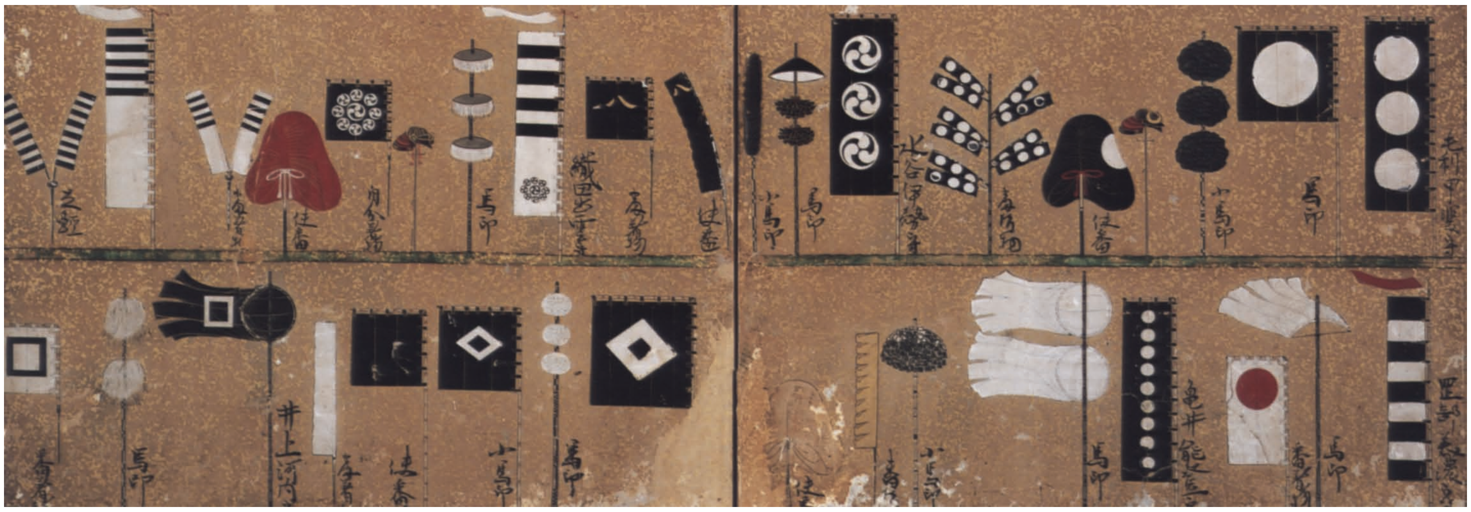
### 205.

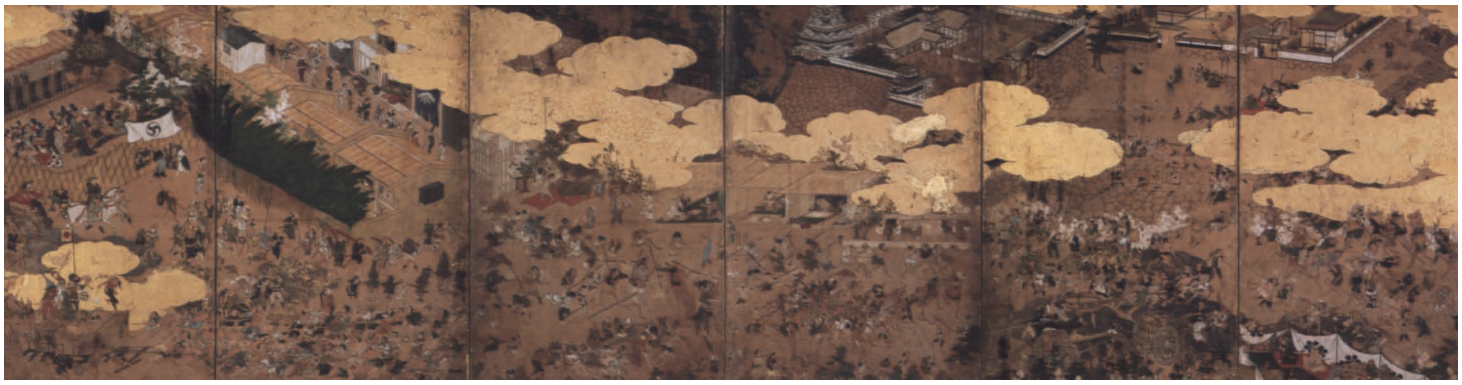
## Military standards

## 諸将旌旗図屏風

Edo period, 17th century
Six-panel folding screen: colors on paper
117.8 × 288.5 cm (46⅜ × 113⅝ in.)
Ōsaka Castle Museum

The screen's six panels are subdivided horizontally into six sections, each of which depicts some of the *horo* (canopies), *sashimono* (personal flags), *umajirushi* (camp standards), and *hata* (banners) that were used to distinguish between daimyo on the battlefield. It includes the emblems of eighty daimyo, including Oda Nobunaga, Oda Nobutada, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Toyotomi Hidetsugu, and other figures allied to the Oda and Toyotomi clans, such as the famous warriors Takeda Shingen and Akechi Mitsuhide. Among the standards illustrated on the screen are some in the shape of helmets, including many unique *kawari-kabuto*, suggesting that these individual, often highly inventive pieces served a purpose on the battlefield as easily recognized rallying points. ST





**206.**

## The Construction of a Castle

築城図屛風 六曲一隻

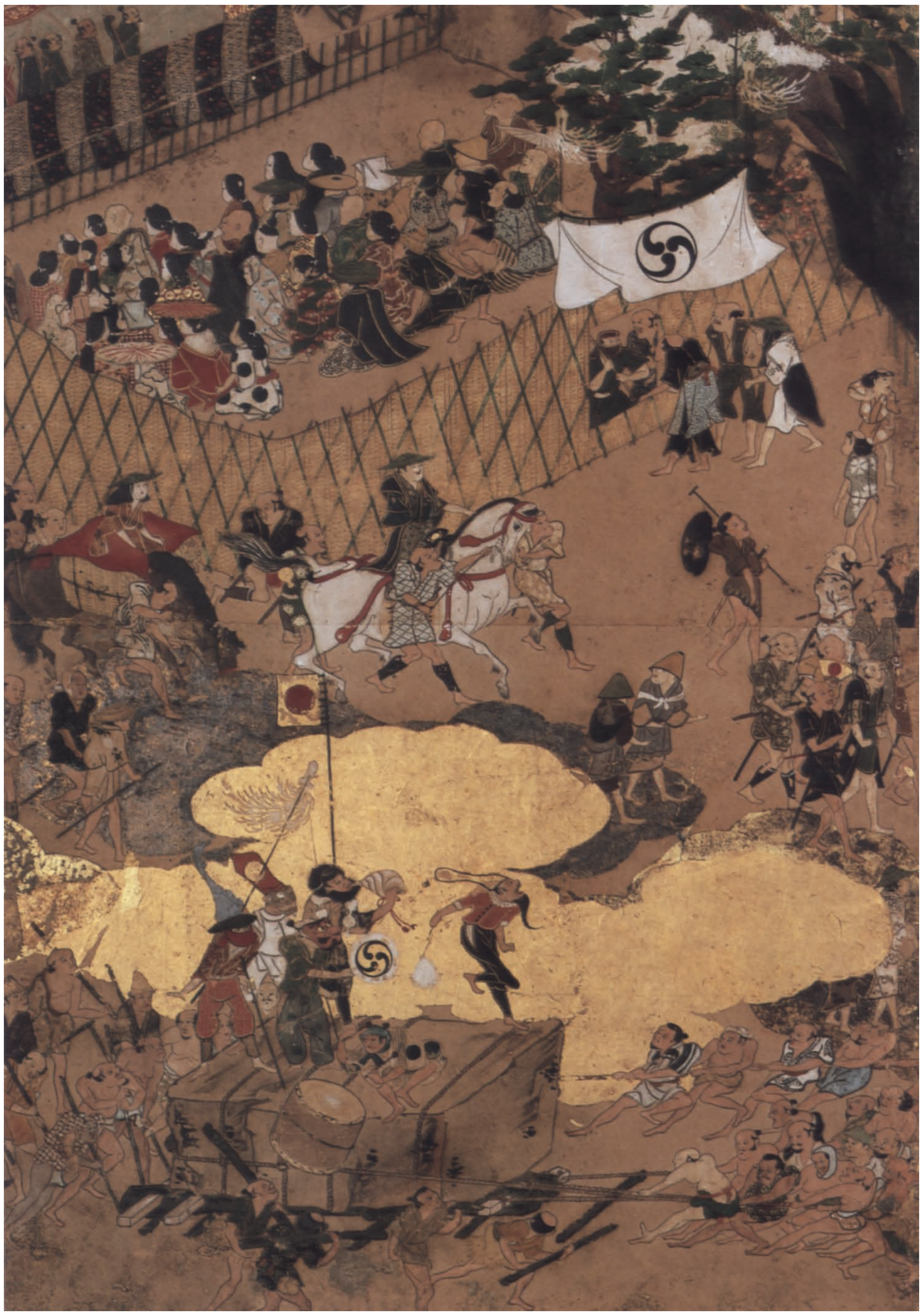
---

Momoyama period, 17th century
Six-panel folding screen: ink, color, and gold on paper
55.8 × 210.2 cm (22 × 82¾ in.)
Nagoya City Museum, Aichi Prefecture

---

The feverish activity of a castle town is depicted in this small screen, which judging from the appearance of the streets is believed to date to the latter part of the Keichō era (1596–1615). One theory holds that it shows the start of construction of Sunpu Castle, Tokugawa Ieyasu's residence in Suruga province (present-day Shizuoka Prefecture) in 1607. There are no other known depictions of such an unusual scene from this date, making the screen a particularly important record of contemporary customs and popular entertainment, such as kabuki theater, seen at the top of the detail at right.

ST



Kanō Tanshin Morimasa

## 207.

## Ieyasu and the Sixteen Commanders of the Tokugawa

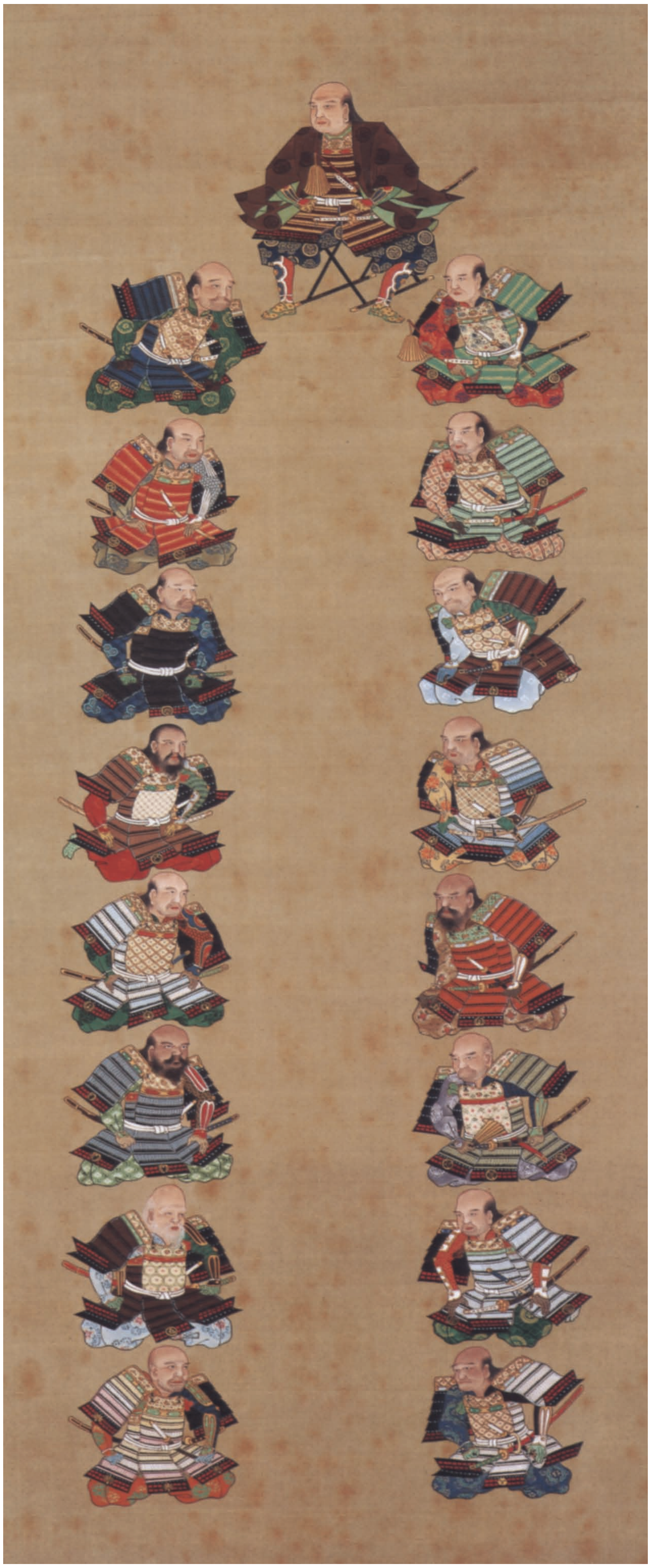
## 家康及び徳川十六将図

---

Edo period, 17th century
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
121.2 × 50.6 cm (47¾ × 19⅞ in.)
Kunōzan Tōshōgū Shrine, Shizuoka Prefecture

---

Tokugawa Ieyasu is shown at top center, with his sixteen retainers, all wearing armor, seated on either side of him. In other versions of the subject, the retainers are arranged in a circle around Ieyasu. Among the individuals depicted are Sakai Tadatsugu (1527–1596), Honda Tadakatsu (1548–1610), Sakakibara Yasumasa (1548–1606), and Ii Naomasa (1561–1602), known as the Shi-Tennō—the "Four Trusted Retainers" of Tokugawa Ieyasu—as well as Matsudaira Yasutada (1545–1618). The painting was revered by the Tōshōgū religion (which venerated Ieyasu) during the Edo period and can be interpreted iconographically as a representation of Ieyasu as Buddha (under the Shinto name Tōshōgū Daigongen) with the retainers representing the Four Heavenly Kings and the Jūni Shinshō (Twelve Guardian Deities) of Buddhism, here protecting the deified Ieyasu. The painter, Kanō Tanshin Morimasa (1653–1718), was the first son of Kanō Tan'yū (1602–1674) and the second generation of the Kajibashi branch of the Kanō school founded by his father. Tanshin also worked for the imperial court. ST



## 208.

# Ikeda Tsuneoki

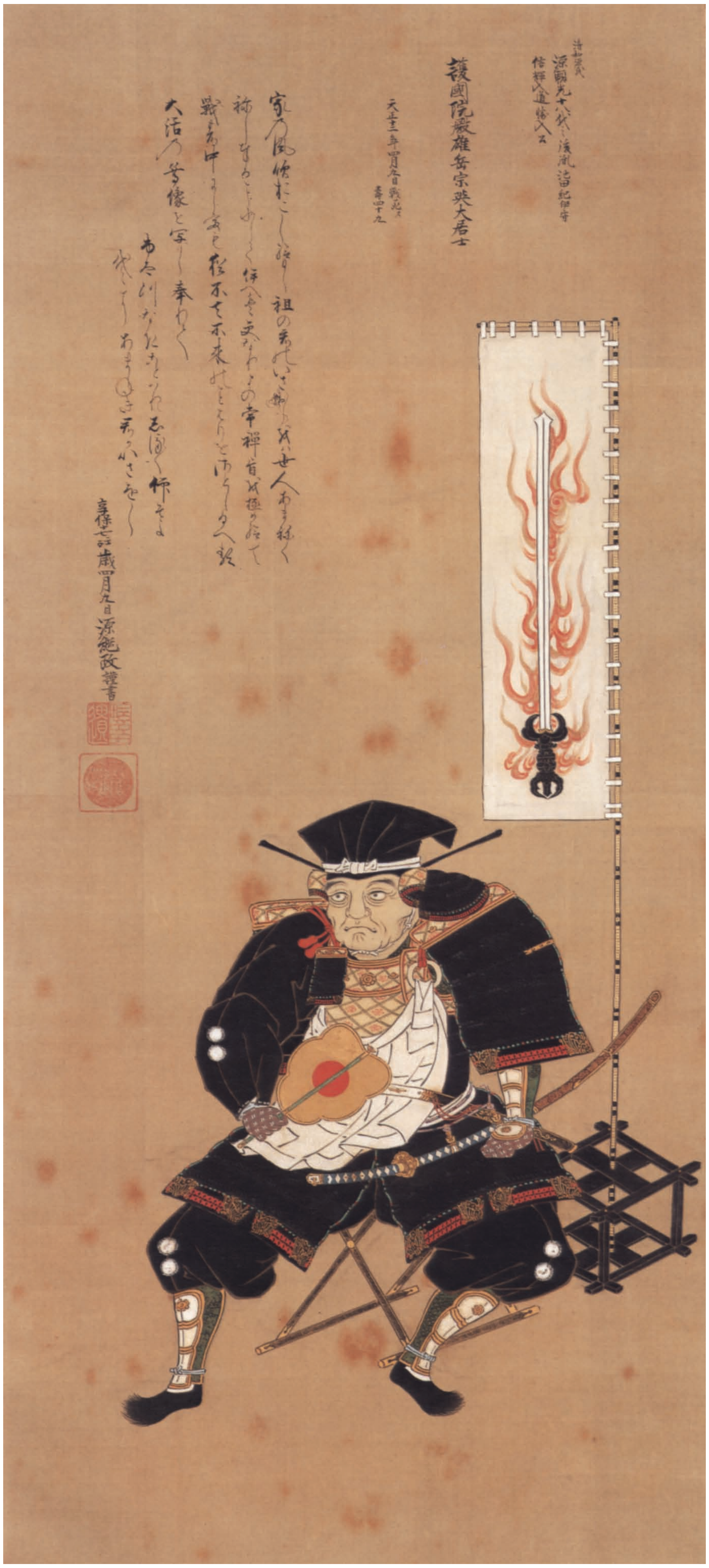
## 池田恒興像

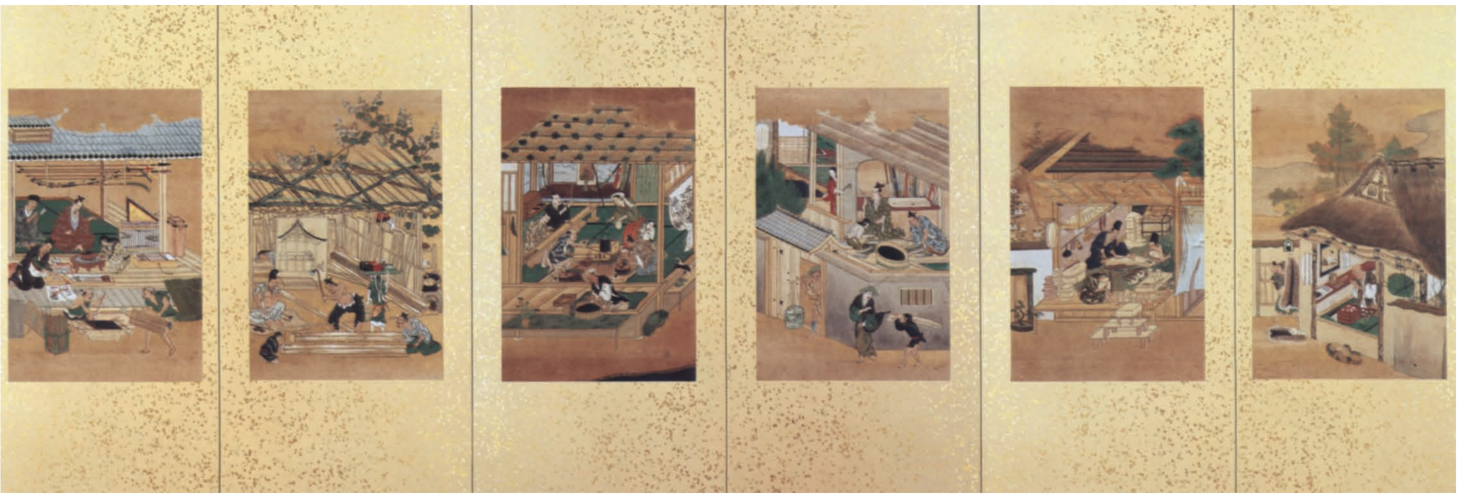
Edo period, 18th century
Hanging scroll: ink and colors on silk
99.5 × 44.2 cm (39⅛ × 17⅜ in.)
Hayashibara Museum of Art, Okayama Prefecture

Ikeda Tsuneoki (Nobuteru, 1536–1584) was the son of Oda Nobunaga's wet nurse. He was retained by Nobunaga, under whom he achieved considerable military success, and later served under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, eventually becoming lord of Ōsaka Castle. He is depicted here wearing his *ō-yoroi* armor embellished with butterfly-shaped ornaments as well as a *kesa*, or priest's surplice—the white garment hanging at the front of his chest—believed to show that the portrait dates from after he took Buddhist orders. His helmet, which is of the *nagezukin* (cloth cap) type, is black with a white headband (*hachimaki*) and has long, slender *kanzashi* (hairpins) that extend out to the left and right. At the back of the helmet is a black-laced *shikoro* (neck guard).

An inscription at the top of the painting written by Ikeda Tsugumasa, the sixth-generation lord of the Okayama domain following Tsuneoki, gives the date of the ninth day of the fourth month in the seventh year of the Kyōhō era (1722). A similar portrait of Ikeda Tsuneoki is inscribed with the date of the nineteenth year of the Kan'ei era (1642), and it is assumed that this painting is based on that original. The scroll was passed down in the Ikeda family.

ST





## 209.

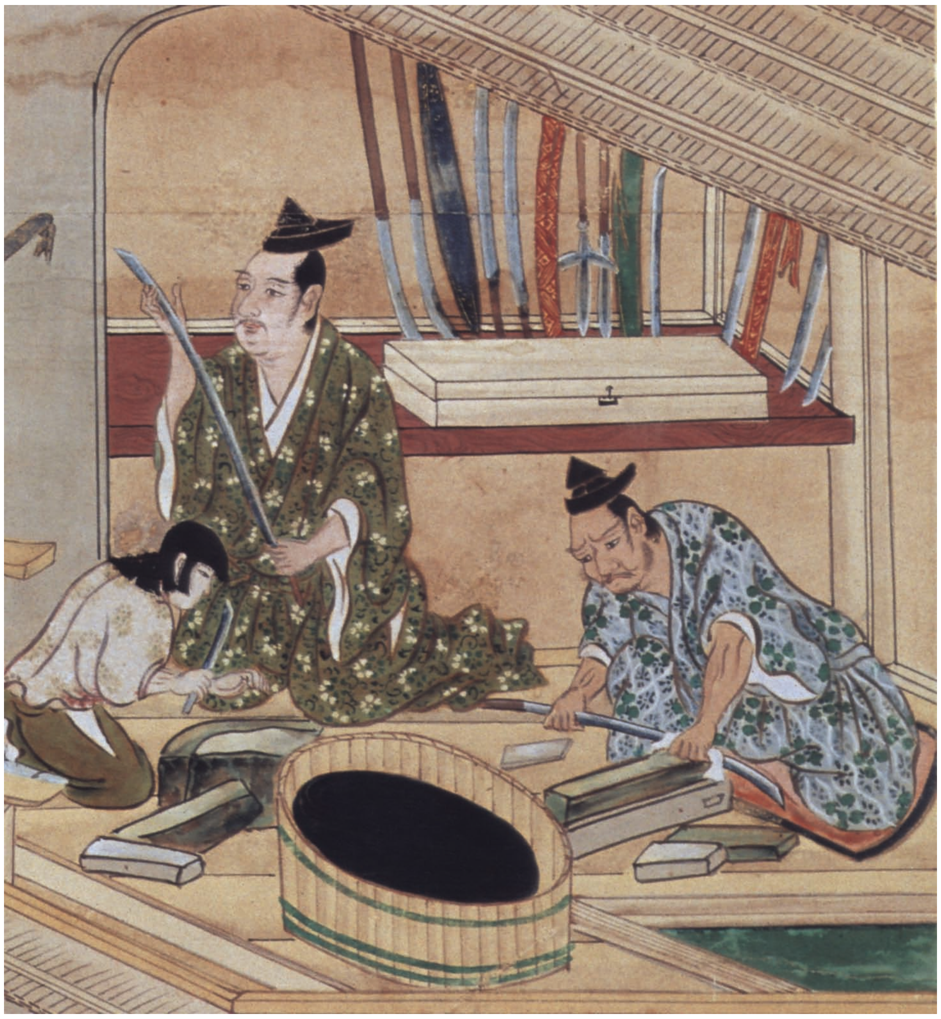
## Screen showing various crafts

## 屛風 職人図

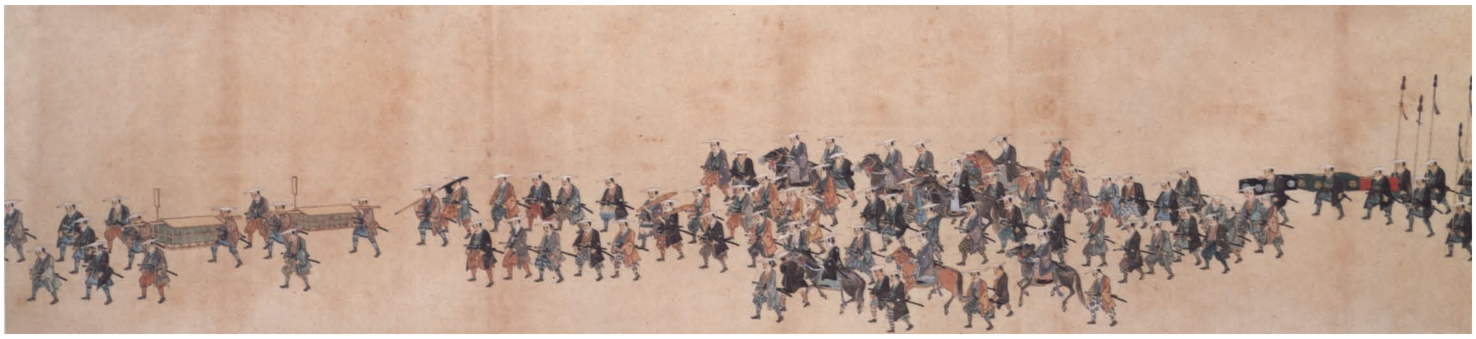
Edo period, 17th century
Six-fold screen: ink and colors on paper
Overall, 115.5 × 312.6 cm (45½ × 123⅛ in.);
each leaf, 58.5 × 39 cm (23 × 15⅜ in.)
Suntory Museum of Art, Tokyo

The genre paintings on this screen illustrate the daily lives and activities of various craftsmen during the Momoyama or early Edo period. Numerous sketchbooks and handscrolls with such imagery exist; this screen, one of four, incorporates six pages from what is believed to have originally been a sketchbook. The typical set includes twenty-four crafts, one on each panel. This set is unusual in that it contains a twenty-fifth. Depicted here (right to left) are: a writing-brush maker; a maker of curved containers of cypress wood; a sword polisher; a *tsuba* maker; a carpenter; and, on the final panel, an arrowhead maker and an arrow maker (or fletcher), the additional craft. The craftsmen shown in the other panels of the set (not illustrated) include a sculptor of Buddhist images, an umbrella maker, an armorer, a scribe of sutras, a braid maker, a stencil-pattern maker, a leather worker, a fan maker, a bowyer, a maker of Buddhist rosaries, a weaver, a swordsmith, a *maki-e* lacquerer, a maker of deerskin trousers, a tatami maker, a cooper, an embroiderer, and a tie-dyer.

ST



Detail of panel depicting sword polishers



Odagiri Shūko

### **210.**

## Daimyo Procession to Edo

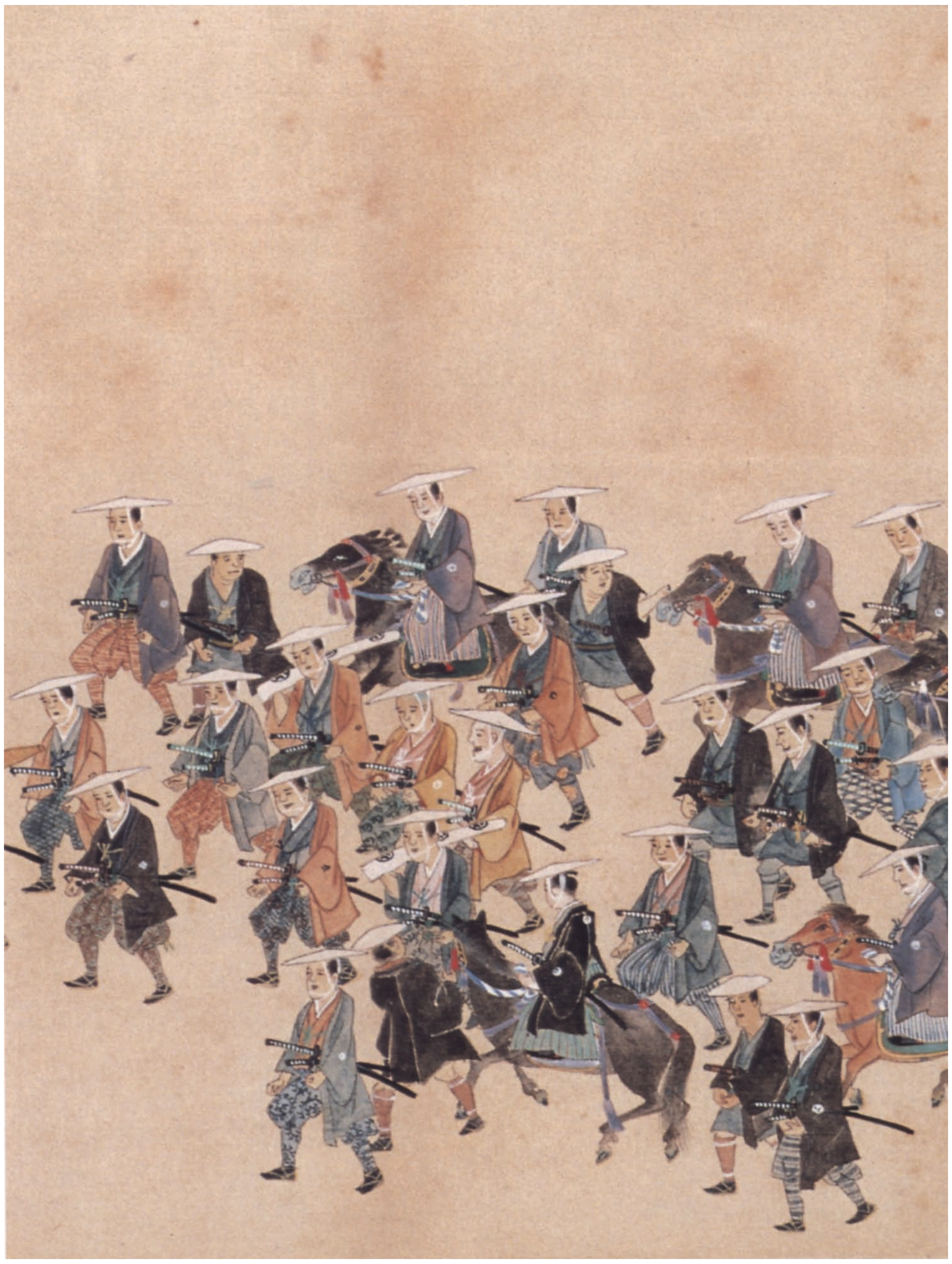
## 行列図

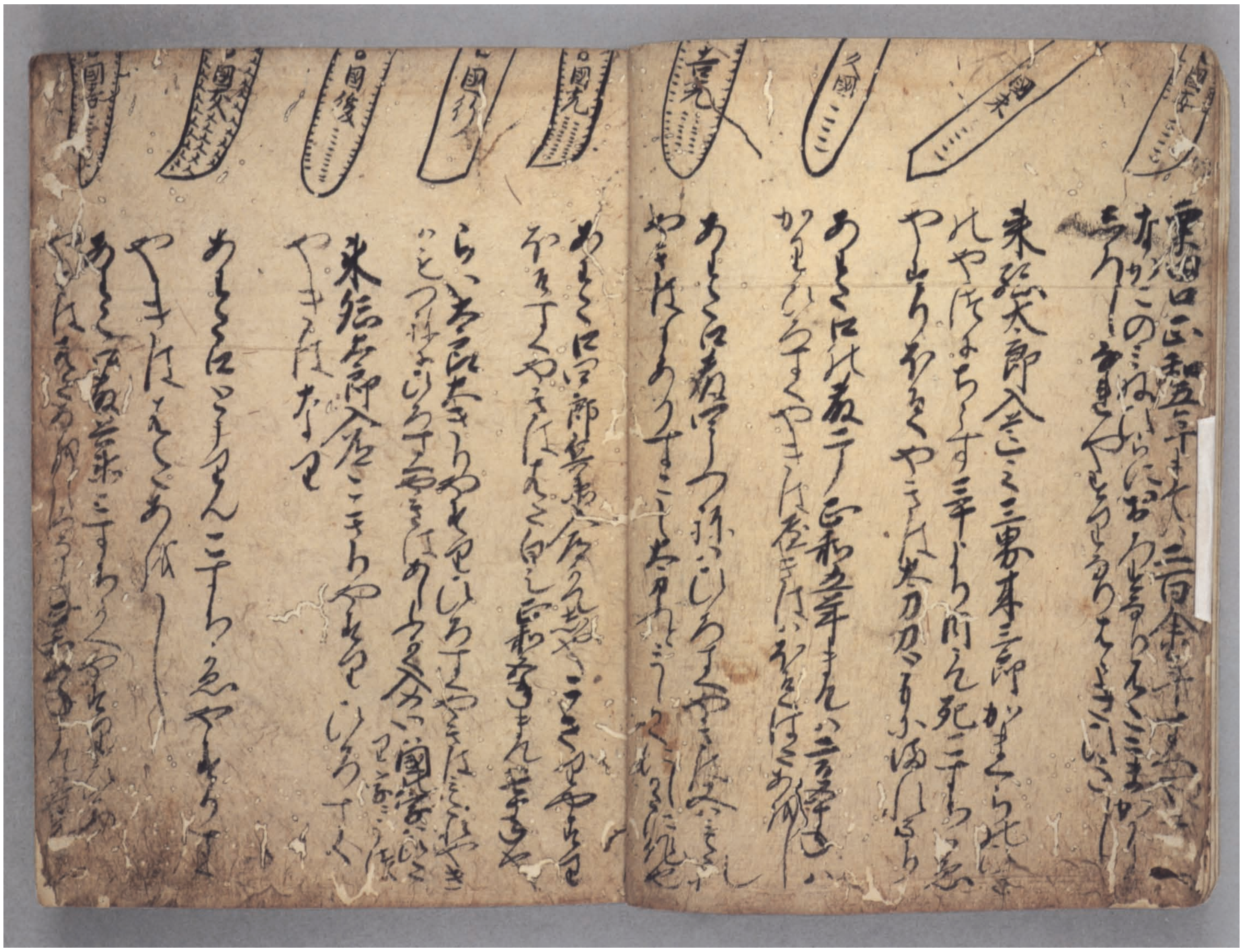
Edo period, 19th century
Handscroll: ink and colors on paper
H. 28.9 cm (11⅜ in.); L. 25.9 m (84 ft. 11 in.)
The Tokugawa Art Museum, Aichi Prefecture

Under the Edo-period *sankin kotai* system, daimyo were obliged to alternate each year between living in their own domains and living in Edo. Designed to prevent rebellions against the *bakufu*, the system proved an extremely effective means of controlling the local feudal lords. When daimyo were in residence in their own domains, for example, their first wives and children remained behind in Edo as hostages. The lavish processions to Edo required under the *sankin kotai* were also enormous expenditures, limiting the funds available to daimyo for military purposes. In addition, the processions were potent displays of the power of the *bakufu* (and thus the shogun) that could be seen throughout the provinces of Japan.

This scroll depicts the procession of the daimyo of the Owari Tokugawa from Nagoya Castle in Edo. His retainers can be seen carrying a variety of arms and equipment, including swords, bows, arrow boxes, quivers, staff weapons, and guns. The painter, Odagiri Shūko, a samurai of the Owari *han* (domain), was well known as an artist. The handscroll was passed down in the Owari Tokugawa family.

ST





### 211.

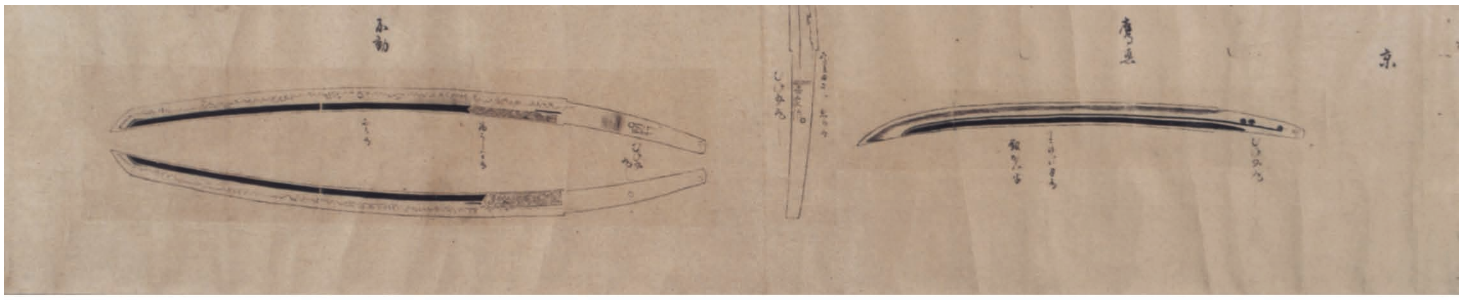
### *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi* (Manuscript of swordsmiths' signatures and sword connoisseurship)

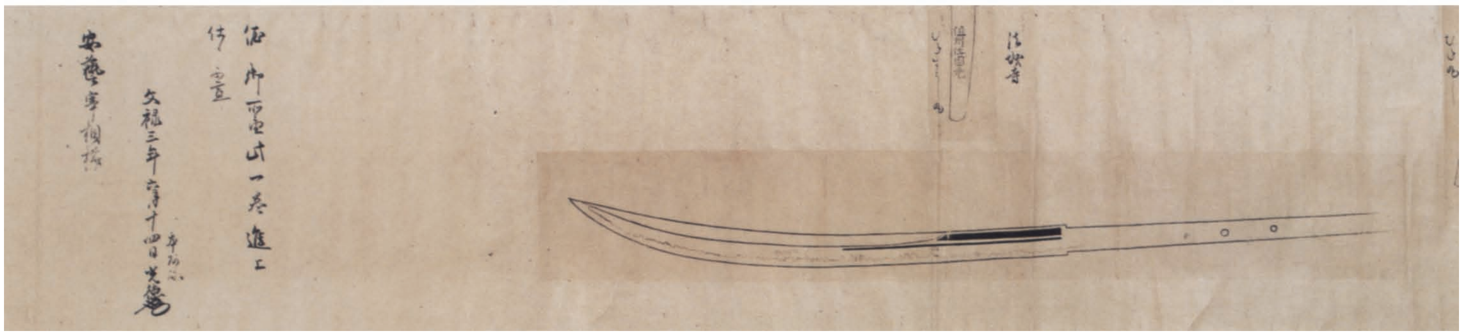
重要文化財　観智院本銘尽

Muromachi period, 1423
Ink on paper
L. 27.5 cm (10⅞ in.); W. 21.3 cm (8⅜ in.)
National Diet Library
**Important Cultural Property**

Japanese swords have been studied and researched since ancient times, as attested by documents from the Kamakura period. This manuscript, formally known as the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi*, is a rich compendium of information gathered from the various swordsmith schools. Preserved in the Kanchi-in of the Kyōō Gokoku-ji—a temple within a larger temple complex in Kyōto that contains records of the Kamakura period—it is dated in a postscript to 1423, in the Muromachi period, and is thus the oldest comprehensive reference work related to Japanese swords. It comprises a collection of the signatures of swordsmiths in each region of Japan. In addition, the manuscript details their lineages and explains the characteristics of their works. Many of the later books on swords were based on this document as a primary text.

ST





## 212.

## Sword illustrations by Hon'ami Kōtoku

## 重要文化財　光徳刀絵図

Momoyama period, 1594
Handscroll: ink on paper
38.3 × 268.6 cm (15⅛ × 105¾ in.)
Inscribed: 本阿弥光徳 HON'AMI KŌTOKU
Mohri Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture
**Important Cultural Property**

Hon'ami Kōtoku (1554–1620), a sword appraiser and polisher of the famous Hon'ami family, was retained by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and, subsequently, by the family of the Tokugawa shogun. He gave this illustration of swords to Mori Terumoto, daimyo of Aki province (present-day Hiroshima Prefecture), in the third year of the Bunroku era (1594). The handscroll shows the points necessary to consider in the appreciation of swords and is particularly valuable because many of the swords it illustrates were selected from among famous blades once owned by Hideyoshi. Beginning with the sword called "Taka no Su Munechika" (Hawk's-nest Munechika), it includes works by fifty-one great smiths from the Heian to the Nanbokuchō period (11th–14th century) active in Yamashiro, Yamato, Bizen, Sagami, Etchū, Chikuzen, Bingo, and other provinces: sixty-five swords in total, illustrated full-size together with details of their characteristic *hamon* (tempering pattern), *jihada* (steel surface texture), *horimono* (engraving), *nakago* (tang), and *mune* (back edge). Fifteen of them were certainly owned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and more were likely from his collection. This is the oldest such compilation that illustrates the swords in full length, and many of the blades that appear here were later illustrated in the *Kyōhō Meibutsu Chō*, a catalogue of Japan's finest swords and swordsmiths published in the sixth year of the Kyōhō era (1721). The scroll, which was passed down in the Mori family, is not only an important record of the types of swords owned by the highest-ranking samurai in the Momoyama and early Edo periods, it is valuable as an example of the classification system used for famous objects at that time. ST

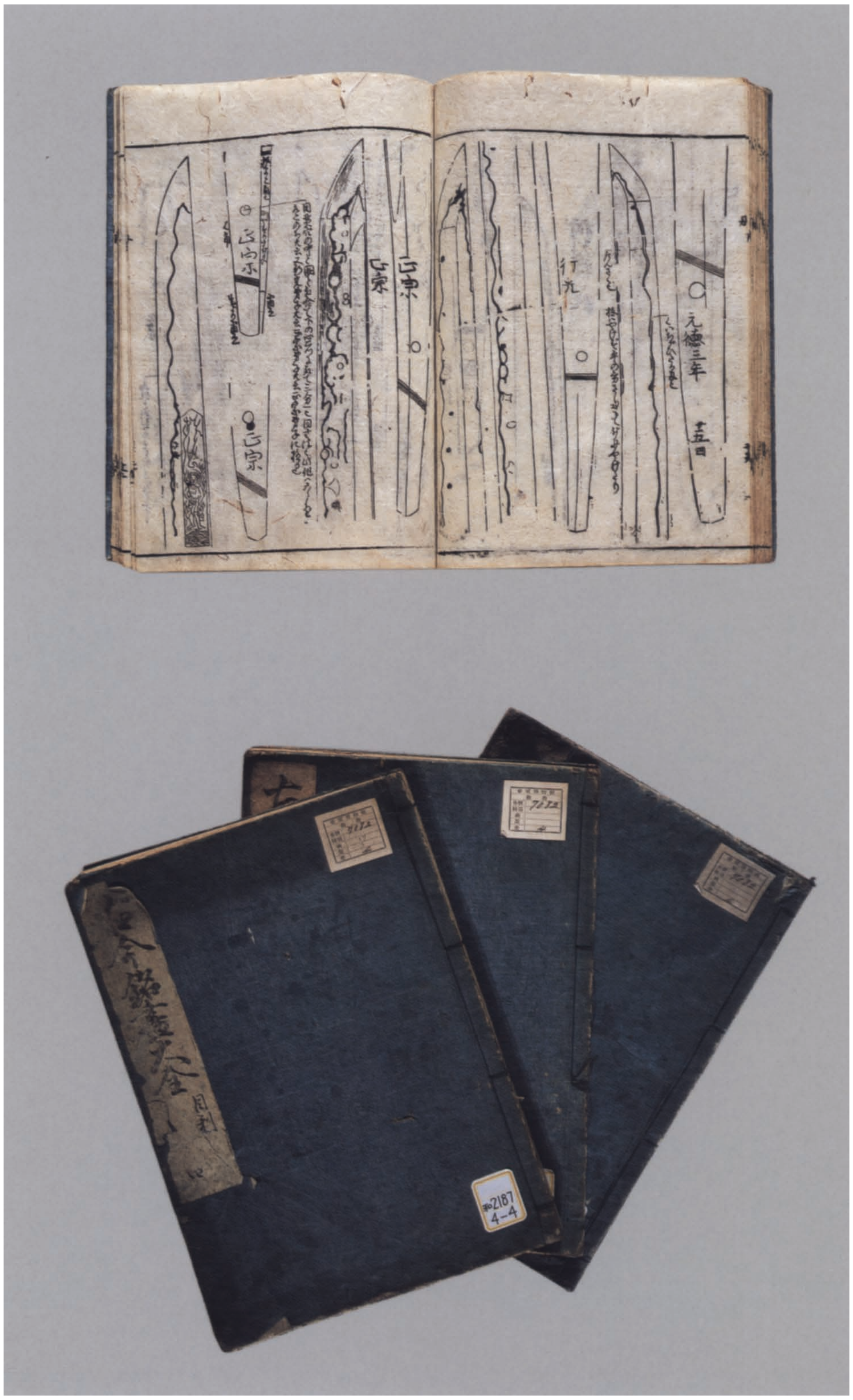
**213.**

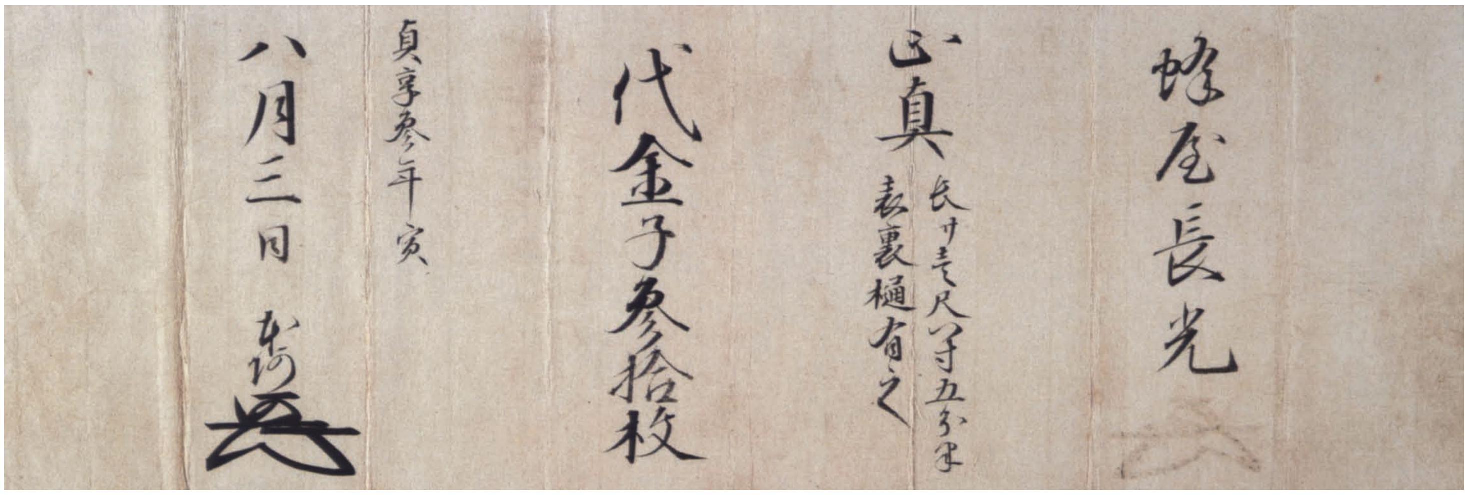
## *Kokon Meizukushi Taizen* (Compendium of inscriptions over the ages)

## 古今銘尽大全

Edo period, 1702
Ink on paper
22.8 × 16.5 cm (9 × 6½ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

Books recording the characteristics of the work of swordsmiths have existed since the Kamakura period. The oldest surviving example is the *Kanchi-in Bon Meizukushi* (cat. no. 211), dated in a postscript to 1423. Other books include the *Ojaku Sho* and the *Genki Gannen Mekiki Sho*, which date from the Muromachi period, and the *Kokon Meizukushi*, which was compiled as a publication in 1661 from the ***hidansho*** (secret discussions) and ***hidensho*** (secret transmissions)—what could be described as closely guarded "professional secrets"—of Utsunomiya Mikawa Nyūdō, a sword appraiser retained by Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun (r. 1367–95). By the late Edo period there were as many as ten editions of the book and it was widely distributed; the edition published in the Jōkyō era (1687) was renamed the *Kokon Meizukushi Taizen*. This copy of the *Kokon Meizukushi Taizen*, published in the fifteenth year of the Genroku era (1702), contains genealogies of the smiths in each region, the characteristics of their works, copies of the shapes of their tangs and blades, their ***hamon*** (tempering patterns) and forging styles, and samples of their signatures. The lineages and blade characteristics described within have provided the foundation for present-day study of the Japanese sword. HK





蜂屋長光
正真　長サ弐尺四寸五分半
表裏樋有之
代金子参拾枚
貞享参年寅
八月三日　本阿

**214.**

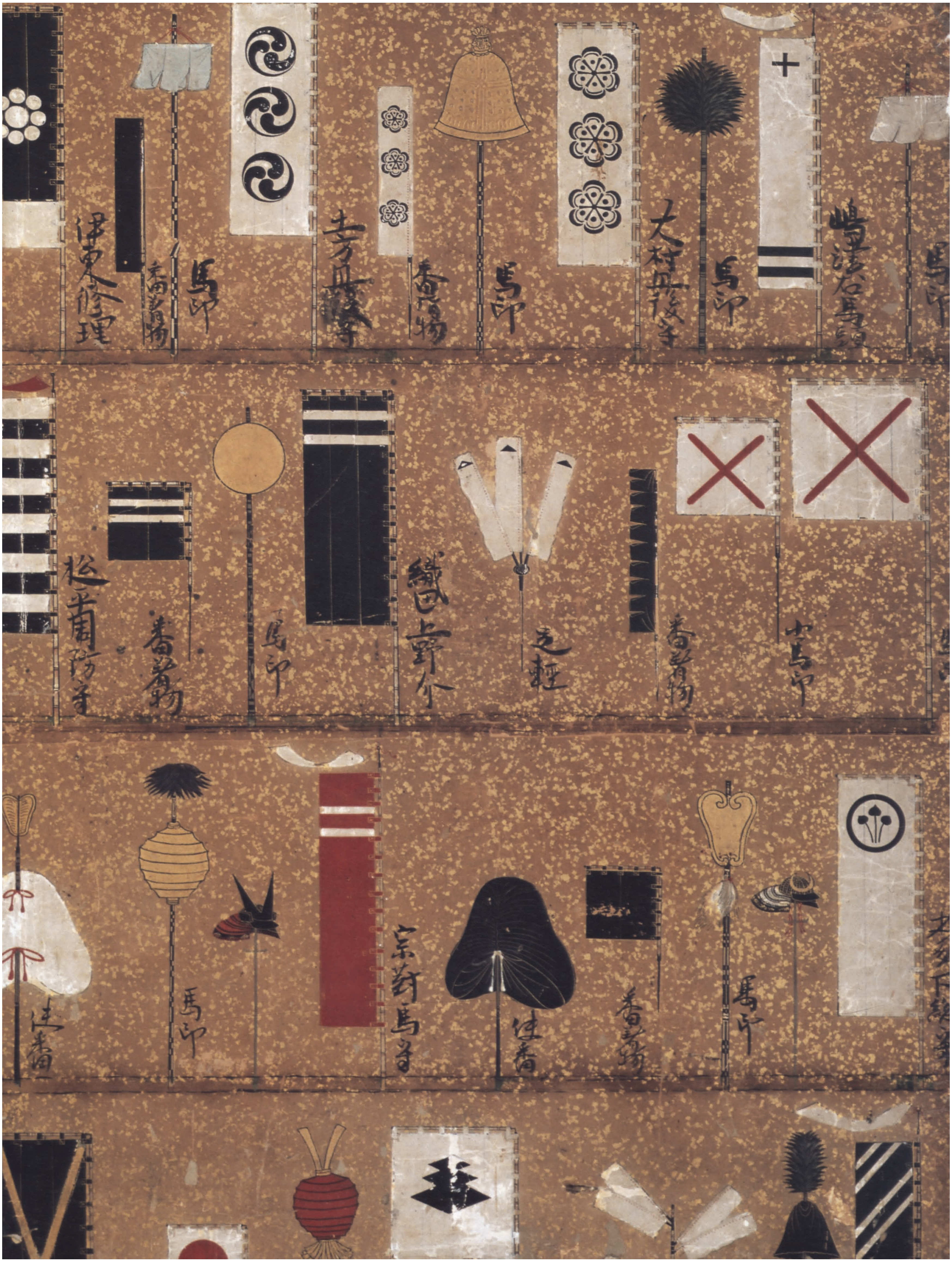
*Origami* (certificate of appraisal) by Hon'ami Kōjō

折紙　本阿弥光常筆　1枚

Edo period, 1686
Ink on paper
34.2 × 50.5 cm (13½ × 19⅞ in.)
Tokyo National Museum

*Origami* (literally "folded paper") were originally large sheets that were used for correspondence or to record gifts. For swords, they documented the authenticity of signed blades, recorded attributions to the makers of unsigned blades, and included a valuation in terms of weight in gold or silver. *Origami* were issued mainly by the Hon'ami family, who were descended from Myōhon (1252–1355). The family was reestablished by the ninth generation, Hon'ami Kōtoku (see cat. no. 212)—who was retained by Toyotomi Hideyoshi—and continued to flourish until the nineteenth generation, in the late Edo period.

It is said that Kōtoku received permission from Toyotomi Hideyoshi to appraise swords and issue *origami*. Although there are no existing *origami* written in Kōtoku's hand, there are some written by his son Koshitsu. This example was written by the thirteenth generation, Kōjō, and is the *origami* for a famous *tachi* known as "Hachiya Nagamitsu," whose present whereabouts are unknown. Written in the third year of the Jōkyō era (1686), it confirms the authenticity of the blade's signature and provides a valuation of thirty pieces of gold, or, in the currency of the period, three hundred *ryo*, an extremely large sum. HK


馬印
嶋津右馬頭
馬印
大村丹後守
馬印
番指物
土方兵庫守
馬印
番指物
伊東修理
小馬印
番指物
足軽
織田上野介
馬印
番指物
松平周防守
本多下総守
馬印
番指物
使番
宗対馬守
馬印
使番

APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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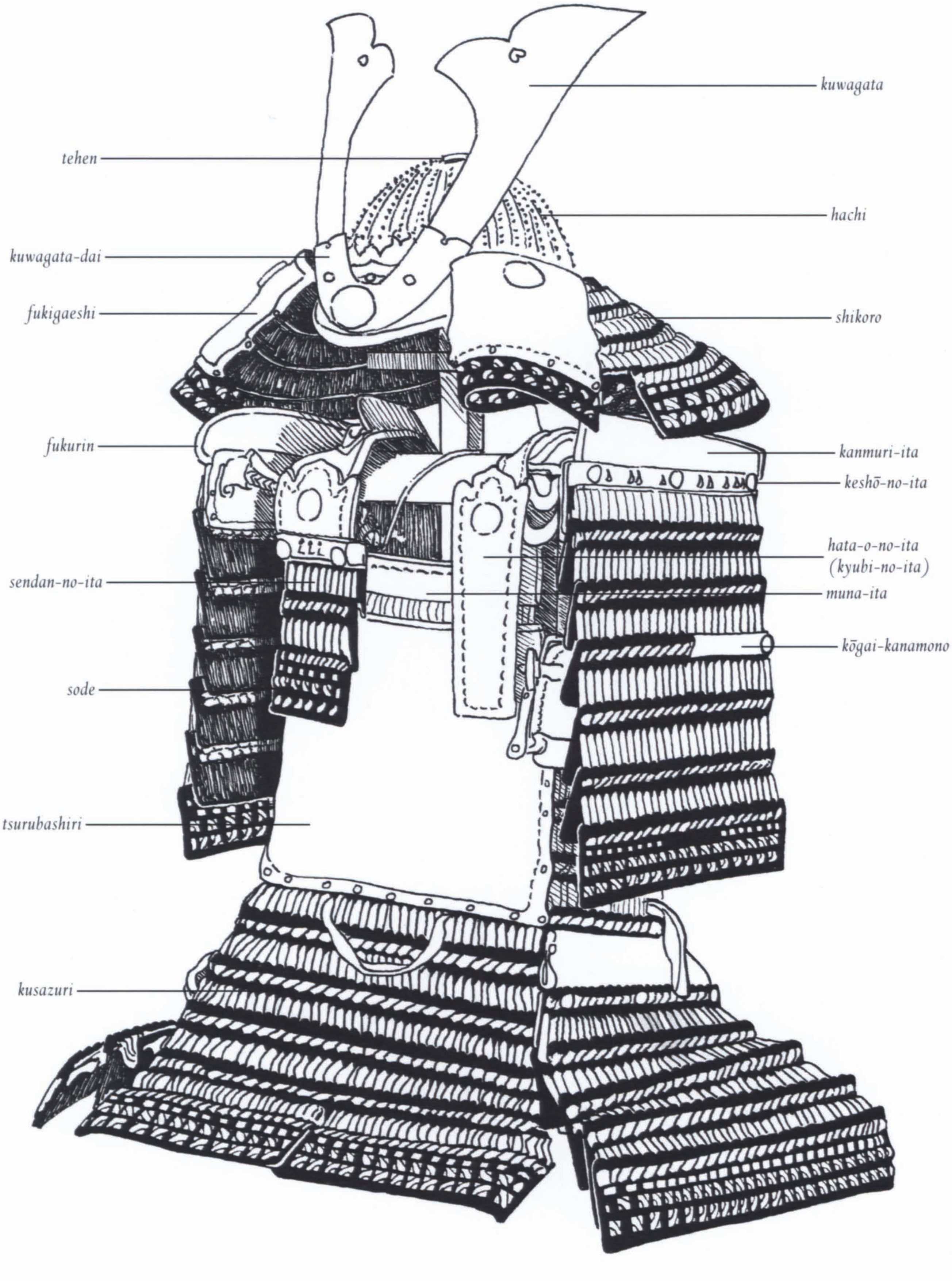
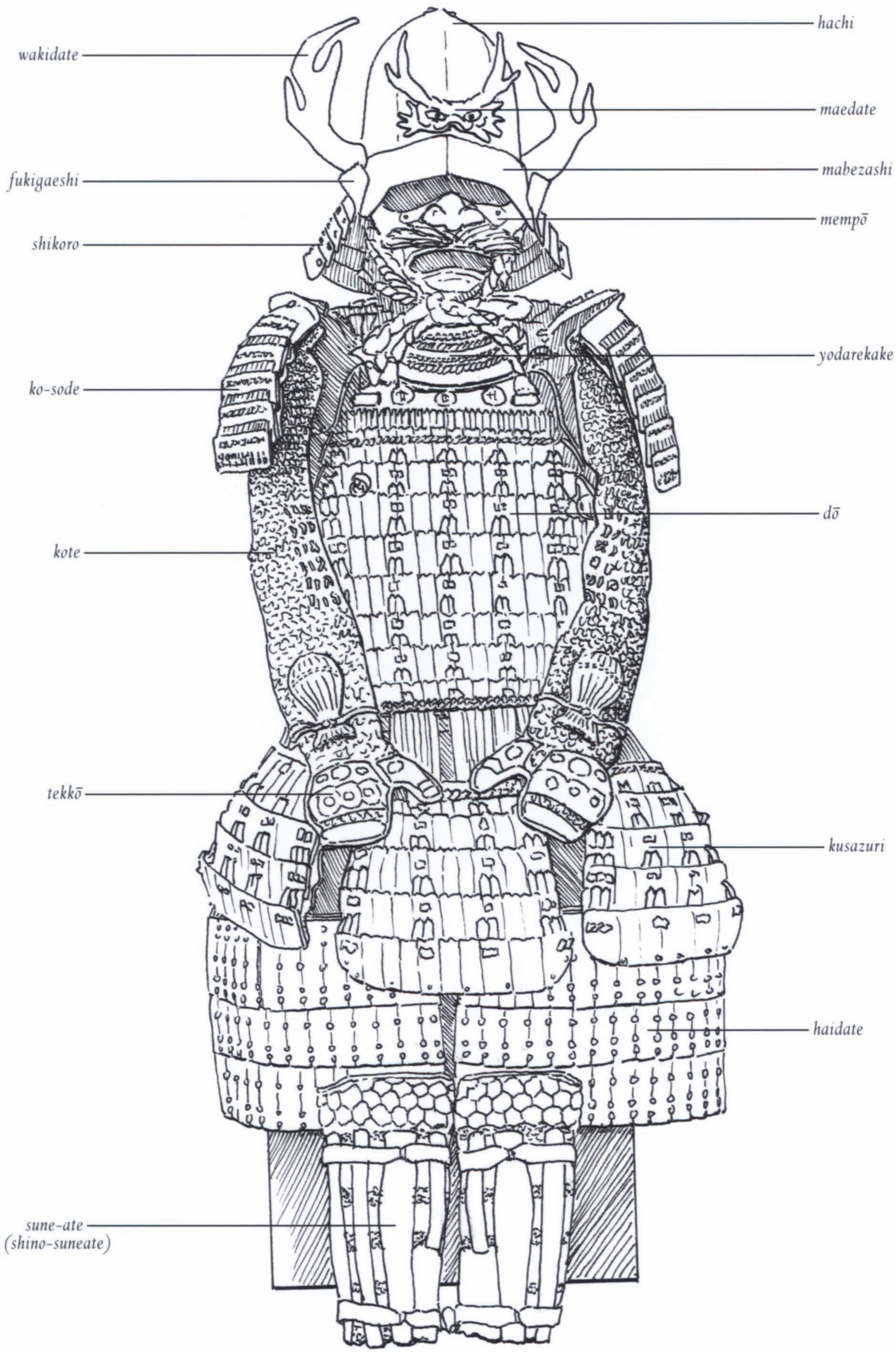
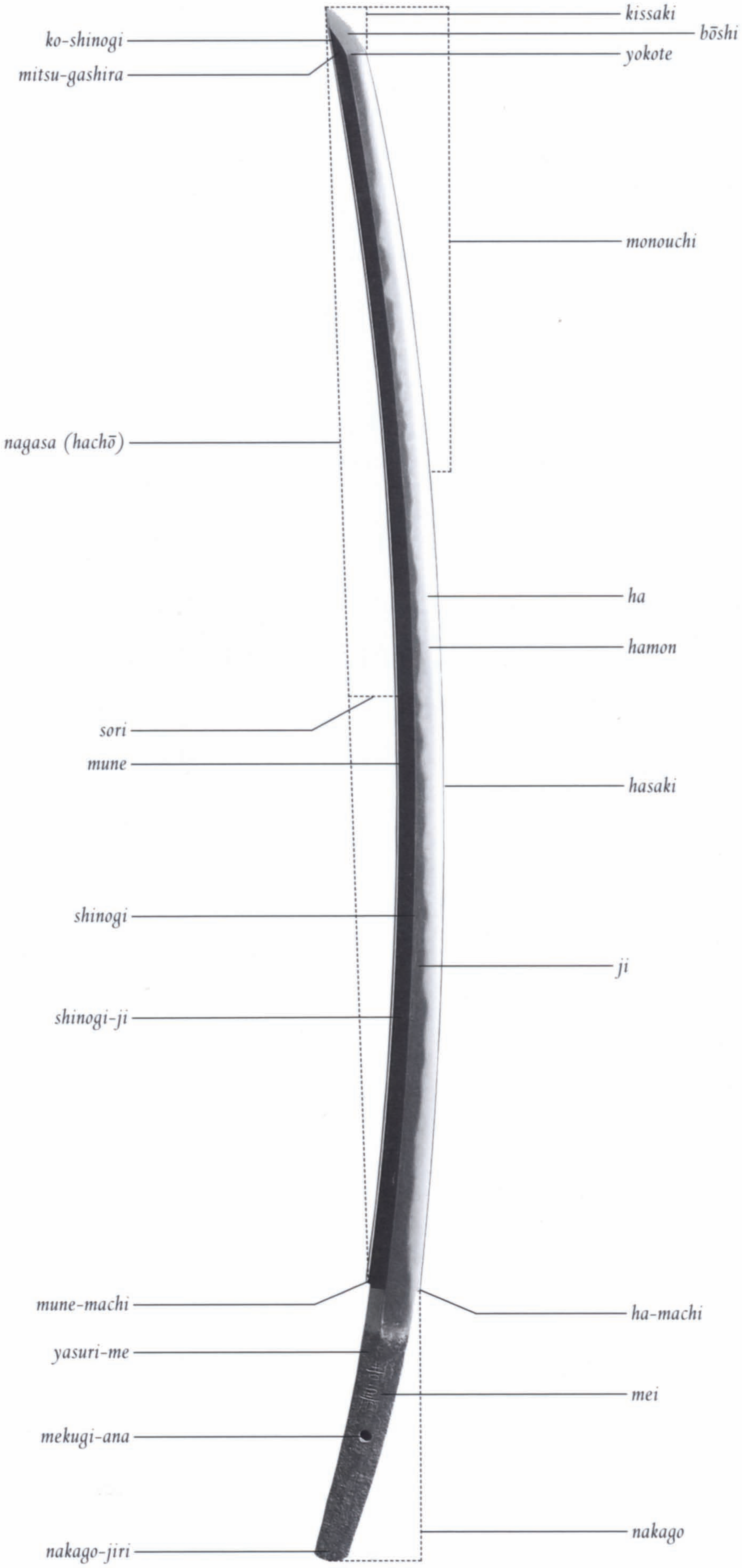

kuwagata
tehen
hachi
kuwagata-dai
fukigaeshi
shikoro
fukurin
kanmuri-ita
keshō-no-ita
hata-o-no-ita
(kyubi-no-ita)
sendan-no-ita
muna-ita
kōgai-kanamono
sode
tsurubashiri
kusazuri

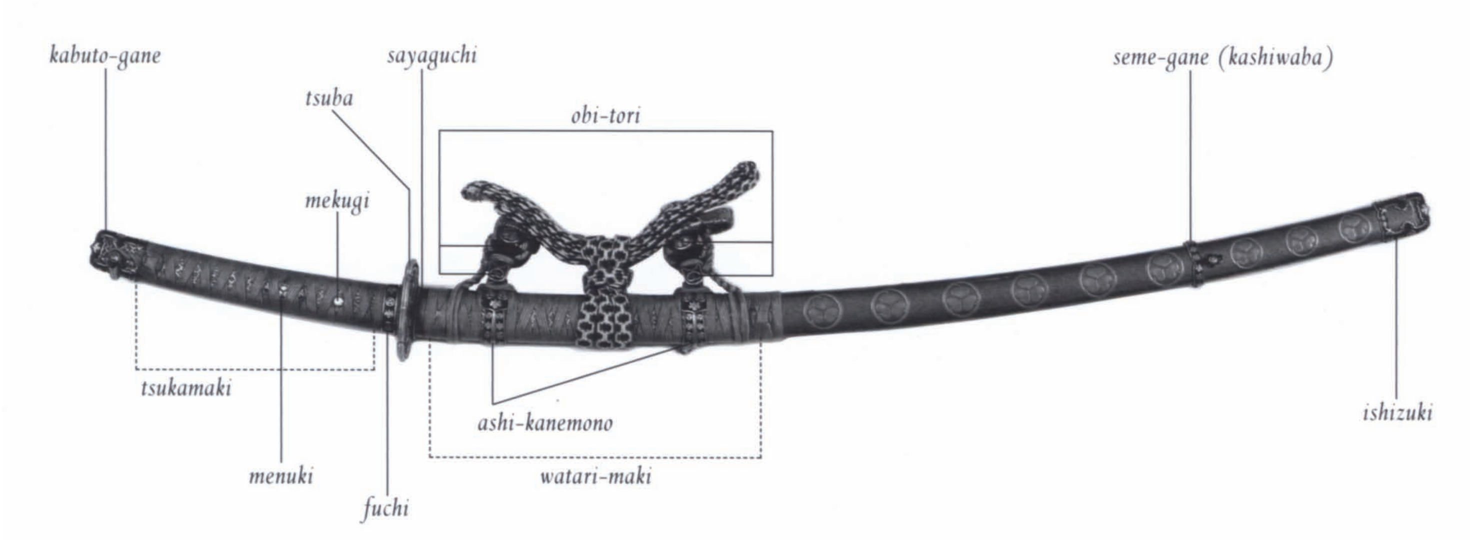
Appendix B: *Tōsei gusoku* armor


wakidate
hachi
maedate
fukigaeshi
mabezashi
mempō
shikoro
yodarekake
ko-sode
dō
kote
tekkō
kusazuri
haidate
sune-ate
(shino-suneate)

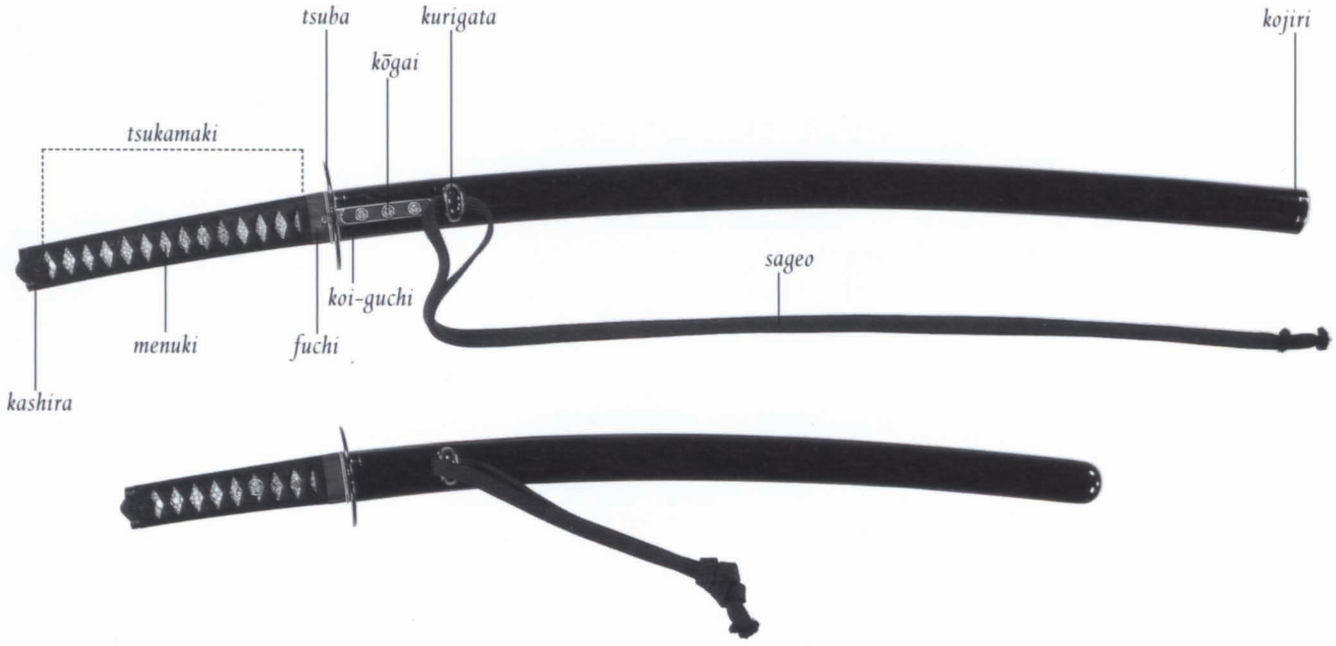
# Appendix C: Blade terminology


kissaki
bōshi
ko-shinogi
yokote
mitsu-gashira
monouchi
nagasa (hachō)
ha
hamon
sori
mune
hasaki
shinogi
ji
shinogi-ji
mune-machi
ha-machi
yasuri-me
mei
mekugi-ana
nakago
nakago-jiri

Appendix D: *Tachi* mounting


kabuto-gane
sayaguchi
tsuba
obi-tori
seme-gane (kashiwaba)
mekugi
tsukamaki
ashi-kanemono
ishizuki
menuki
watari-maki
fuchi

Appendix E: *Katana* mounting (shown as part of a *daishō* pair)


tsuba
kurigata
kojiri
kōgai
tsukamaki
sageo
koi-guchi
menuki
fuchi
kashira

# GLOSSARY

*abumi*: stirrups

*agemaki*: bow of silk cord attached to the back of some types of *kabuto* and *dō*

*aikuchi*: sword or dagger mounting with no *tsuba*

*ashi*: thin lines or notchlike areas of martensitic structure projecting toward the cutting edge transversely across the *ha*; notch shapes in a tempering pattern

*ashi-kanamono*: suspension fittings on a *tachi* scabbard

*bachi*: the helmet bowl (*hachi*), spelled *bachi* when used in conjunction with another term (e.g., *suji-bachi*)

*bakufu*: military government or administration

*boshi*: tempering pattern in the point section of a blade

*chiisagatana-goshirae*: a type of *koshigatana-goshirae* with a small *tsuba*

*chikei*: bright, short curving lines between the ridge and edge of a *tsuba*

*chōji*: clove shapes or clove-shaped waves in the *hamon*

*chokutō*: early form of straight, single-edged sword

*daishō*: pair of matching long (*dai*) and short (*shō*) swords or sword mountings comprising a *katana* and *wakizashi*

*dō*: cuirass; armored torso defense

*dōfuku*: surcoat; coat worn over armor by samurai

*dō-maru*: armor originally worn by infantry in the Heian and Kamakura periods and later worn by samurai; the *dō* ties at the right side and the *kusazuri* is divided into seven sections

*dō-maru gusoku*: complete set of *dō-maru* armor

*eboshi*: "crow cap"; type of cloth formal headgear and also a helmet style

*fuchi*: collar at the base of the grip of the sword hilt

*fuchi-gane*: same as *fuchi* (see *fuchigashira*)

*fuchigashira*: pair of matching fittings comprising the collar (*fuchi*) and pommel cap (*kashira*) at opposite ends of the hilt

*fukigaeshi*: on a helmet, the portions of the neck guard that are turned back at the front on either side of the face

*fukurin*: rims or edging, usually made of copper-gilt

*fusedake*: bow made of wood with bamboo attached by adhesive

*fusubegawa*: armor lacing made of deerskin smoked to a brown color using straw

*futatokoromono*: set of sword fittings comprising a *kozuka* or *kōgai* and *menuki*

*gunbai*: type of nonfolding fan used as a commander's baton

*gunome-midare*: compact patterns of regularly wavy or zigzag lines in the *hamon*

*gunsen*: type of military fan used by commanders to signal orders on the battlefield

*gusoku*: "complete set"; common name for armor style developed in the late Muromachi period; also called *tōsei gusoku*

*gyōyō*: leaf-shaped plates protecting the fastenings at the top of the breastplate

*ha*: sharp edge of a blade, including the area of the *hamon*

*habaki*: removable sleeve at the base of the blade, usually made of gilt copper

*hachi*: see *bachi*

*hachi tsuke-ita*: top plate of the *shikoro* of a helmet

*hachimaki*: headband

*hada*: grain structure in the forging pattern of a blade

*haidate*: armor protecting the legs from the thighs to the knees

*ha-machi*: notch or step-in at the base of the cutting edge where the tang begins

*hamon*: tempering pattern; the patterns along the cutting edge of a blade

*haniwa*: unglazed terracotta figurine

*haori*: surcoat with sleeves worn over armor; later form of *dōfuku*

*hara-ate*: simple form of cuiras's that covers only the front of the torso

*haramaki*: type of cuirass distinguished by closing vertically up the center of the back

*hasaki*: blade edge

*hata*: banners

*hato-mune*: "pigeon breast," referring to shape of the front of stirrups *hata-o-no-ita*: plate protecting the shoulder strap fastening and the gap at the top left of the breastplate of a *yoroi* armor; also known as *kyubi-no-ita*

*himeno*: helmet type characterized by a neck guard that is shorter on the sides than in the back

*hinawa-ju*: matchlock gun; also called *teppō*

*hiramaki-e*: flat lacquer

*hirane*: flat-bladed arrowhead

*hirao*: wide textile waistband

*hira-zōgan*: flat inlay

*hira-zukuri*: form of blade that is flat, ridgeless, and triangular in section

*hirumaki no tachi*: *tachi* mounting with a scabbard spiral-wrapped with a metal band

*hishi*: cross-knotted laces on armor

*hitatare*: long jacket worn beneath armor

*hitatsura*: type of *hamon* in which tempering effects can be seen across the entire surface of the blade

*ho-ate*: armor for the face covering the chin and cheeks; a half-mask

*hoko*: early type of socketed spearhead

*hon-kozane*: small individual scales lacquered and laced together to make armor

*hora, horagai*: conch-shell trumpet

*horimono*: engraving on blades

*horo*: cloaklike defense tied to shoulders and waist on the back of armor

*ho-saki*: point of a *kōgai*

*hoshi*: prominent conical rivets on the bowls of Heian-period helmets, or helmets made in that style

*hoshi-bachi*: helmet bowl with *hoshi*-type rivets; type of helmet bowl usually composed of five to ten trapezoidal iron plates arranged in a hemispheric shape and joined together with conical rivets

*hoshi-kabuto*: type of helmet featuring *hoshi*-type rivets

*hotsure*: grain formation along the main *hamon* of a blade resembling frayed yarn

*hyōgo gusari tachi*: sword mounting suspended from chains, popular during the late Heian and Kamakura periods

*hyomon*: silver inlay on a sword mounting

*ichimaimaze*: strips of alternating leather and iron *sane* used in making armor

*ichi-no-ashi*: front suspension fitting on a *tachi* mounting

*ie-bori*: "house carving"; makers of sword fittings who worked for the *bakufu* and generally followed a more traditional or conservative style; see also *machi-bori*

*igi*: two side bars that constitute the seat of a Japanese saddle

*ikakeji*: thick layer of fine gold or silver grains dusted onto a freshly lacquered surface; polished when dry to resemble gold or silver plate

*ikakeji tataki-nuri*: decorative technique used on sword mountings in which a surface is roughened, lacquered, and sprinkled with gold powder

*ikubi-gissaki*: "boar's head" point section of a blade, which is short and wide in relation to the length of the blade

*iro-e*: decoration involving the application of various colored metals to a metal ground using techniques other than inlay

*iroiro odoshi*: multicolored silk lacing on armor

*ishizuki*: chape; metal fitting at the tip of a *tachi* scabbard

*iso*: "shore"; the lower, slightly protruding area of the pommel of a Japanese saddle; see also *umi*

*ita*: plate component of armor

*ita-kin*: covering of thin gold sheet on the back of a *kozuka*

*itame, itame-hada*: "wood grain" forging pattern on a sword blade

*ita-zane*: solid horizontal plates on armor, sometimes made to represent rows of overlapping *sane*

*ito maki no tachi*: type of *tachi* mounting with the scabbard wrapped in silk braid; often including *nashiji* lacquer and metal fittings made of *shakudō*

*iyozane*: *sane* with fourteen holes in two overlapping rows, named for Iyo province, where the style originated

*ji*: flat surface of the blade between the *hamon* and the *shinogi*

*jigane* (or *jitetsu*): surface texture of the steel of a blade

*jihada*: various steel texture patterns on the *ji* of a blade

*jinbaori*: sleeveless surcoat worn over armor

*jindaiko*: battlefield drum

*jineigu*: "command equipment," referring to command or signaling batons, drums, and conch-shell trumpets

*jingai*: conch-shell trumpet

*ji-nie*: relatively large, visible crystals of steel in the flat area of a blade (*ji*)

*juka-chōji*: double or triple clove shapes in the tempering pattern of a blade

*jumonji-yari*: *yari* with a cruciform blade

*kabuki-dō*: main portion of the cuirass of a *yoroi* armor

*kabuto*: helmet

*kabuto-gane*: pommel cap on the hilt of a *tachi*

*kabuto-mino*: wig attached to the base of a helmet bowl and named after the *mino*, a traditional straw cloak

*kaeri-zuno*: small hooklike fixture near the midpoint of a *katana* scabbard, designed to help keep the scabbard in place in the waist sash when the sword is drawn

*kairagizame*: type of *same* (rayskin or sharkskin) that is lacquered black and polished down to create a nodular, floral pattern resembling plum blossoms

*kaku-mimi*: squared rim (*mimi*) on the outer edge of a sword guard

*kamasu-gissaki*: sword point with a cutting edge that is straight rather than curved *kama-yari*: spear with two subsidiary blades that branch off at either side and usually curve slightly downward

*kami-kaki*: "hairdresser"; another term for the *kōgai*, which could be used to arrange the hair

*kanagai*: thin gold sheet used in lacquer decoration

*kanagu mawari*: larger iron plates that are part of a cuirass

*kanmuri-ita*: top plate on the shoulder guards of armor

*kanmuri-otoshi*: blade style in which the ridge continues up to the point

*kantō tachi*: early form of *tachi* with a ring-shaped pommel encircling a stylized pair of dragons or phoenixes

*kao*: symbol or monogram used as a seal or as part of an artist's signature

*kara-tachi*: *tachi* decorated in a Chinese Tang-dynasty style

*kashira*: pommel cap at the end of a *katana* hilt, usually made as part of a set with a matching *fuchi*

*kata-bori*: repoussé; almost all *menuki* are worked in this way

*katadori odoshi*: on armor, patterns formed by progressive rows of multicolored lacing

*katakiri-bori*: oblique engraving using V-shaped chiseling, with one side of the groove at a sharper angle than the other

*katakiriha-zukuri*: blade shape that is ridged on one side and flat on the other

*katana*: curved blade longer than 60 cm; fitted with an *uchigatana*-style mounting and worn in a waist sash with the cutting edge facing up

*katana-hitsu*: central aperture in a sword guard

*kataochi gunome-ba*: tempering style in which one side of the *gunome* (compact waves) angles sharply down while the other is curved

*katchūshi tsuba*: "armorer's" *tsuba*, so named because the pierced ironwork is similar to that on armor

*kawari-kabuto*: "exotic helmet"; often elaborate helmets made in various sculptural, naturalistic, or symbolic forms

*kawazane*: *sane* made of ox leather

*kawazuko-chōji*: tempering pattern with single, rounded *chōji* resembling tadpoles

*kawazutsumi no tachi*: *tachi* mounting with a black-lacquered, leather-wrapped scabbard, fashionable from the late Kamakura through the Muromachi period

*kazaori-eboshi*: helmet style shaped like a "wind-folded" *eboshi* cap

*kazari-tachi*: elaborately decorative sword mountings fitted with false blades, made exclusively for ceremonial use by high-ranking courtiers

*kebiki odoshi*: style of armor lacing in which the *sane-ita* are laced so closely together they are said to resemble hair arranged with a comb

*kebori*: "hairline" carving; engraving in very fine lines

*keikō*: Kofun-period flexible armor made of small leather or iron plates

*ken*: straight, double-edged blade; a sword with such a blade

*kensu*: inexpensive and simplified form of *suji-kabuto*

*kesho-no-ita*: narrow bands or struts at the bases of the large plates on top of the *sode* and *dō*; thin wooden strips below the *kanmuri-ita*

*kigaeshi*: method of coloring leather by first dyeing it in blue and white sections and then dyeing it yellow, so that the resulting colors are yellow and green

*kiji-mata*: "pheasant thigh," referring to the smooth, tapered portion of a *kōgai*

*kindei*: gold powder mixed into lacquer

*kinsen*: bright curling streaks within the *hamon*

*kinsuji*: bright, curling lines in the *hamon*, similar to *chikei*

*kin-zōgan*: gold inlay

*kirigane*: gold leaf

*kiriha-zukuri chokutō*: straight blade with a ridge near the cutting edge and parallel to it for the entire length

*kise*: thin sheet gold or silver soldered to a metal ground

*kissaki*: point section of a blade

*kissaki moroha-zukuri*: double-edged point section

*kittsukezane*: armor strips with a sawtooth profile along the top edge, in imitation of traditional *sane*; plates made to resemble rows of linked *kozane* scales

*ko-chōji*: small clove shapes in the *hamon*

*kodachi*: small *tachi*

*kōgai*: hairdressing tool; implement carried in a slot on the obverse of a *katana* scabbard, often with a matching *kozuka* in a slot on the reverse

*kōgai hitsuana* (or *kōgai hitsu*): opening, often lobed, on the proper right half of a *tsuba* that accommodates the end of the *kōgai*

*kōgai-kanamono*: metal fitting on some types of *sode* for a cord that was loosely tied to the *agemaki* bow on the back of the *dō*

*ko-gunome*: small compact waves in the *hamon*

*ko-gusoku*: "small equipment" or "smaller pieces" of armor, meaning the face mask, sleeves, thigh guards, and shin defenses

*koi-guchi*: collar or fitting at the top of a sword scabbard

*ko-itame, ko-itame hada*: tight wood grain pattern in the steel surface texture of a blade

*kojiri*: chape; fitting at the base of a *katana* scabbard

*ko-katchūshi*: "early armorer's" type of *tsuba*

*kokushitsu no tachi*: black-lacquered *tachi* mountings fashionable in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods

*ko-midare*: compact irregular patterns or waves in the *hamon*

*ko-nie*: small visible crystals of steel in the *hamon*

*koshi*: sometimes used to refer to the upper part of a sword scabbard

*koshigatana-goshirae*: term for a short sword mounting in general; called *chiisagatana-goshirae* when there is a sword guard and *aikuchi-goshirae* when there is none *ko-shinogi*: continuation of the ridge line (*shinogi*) to the point of a blade

*koshi-zori*: blade curvature in which the center of the curve is closer to the tang than to the point section

*ko-sode*: small shoulder guards

*kote*: armored sleeves

*kozane*: small *sane* (scales or lamellae) used to make armor

*kozuka*: handle of a utility knife that is kept in a slot on the reverse of a *katana* scabbard, often with a matching *kōgai* on the obverse

*kozuka-hitsuana* (or *kozuka-hitsu*): semicircular opening on the proper left half of a *tsuba* that accommodates the end of the *kozuka*

*kuichigai-ba*: slightly overlapping temper lines on a sword blade

*kura*: saddle

*kurigata*: pierced knoblike attachment on the side of a *katana* scabbard through which the waist cord (*sageo*) is passed; made of metal, horn, or lacquered wood

*kurokawa odoshi*: black leather lacing

*kusari*: iron mesh used on *kote* and *haidate*; analogous to European mail armor

*kusazuri*: multipart skirt pendant from the *dō* of a Japanese armor

*kuwagata*: decorative antlers mounted on the front of a helmet

*kuwagata-dai*: bracket on a helmet that holds the *kuwagata*; also called the *tsuno-moto*

*kyō-sukashi*: iron *tsuba* decorated using pierced openwork

*kyubi-no-ita*: plate that protects the shoulder strap and the gap at the top left of the breastplate of a *yoroi* armor; alternate name for the *hata-o-no-ita*

*mabizashi*: brim (or peak) on a helmet

*mabizashi tsuki-kabuto*: helmet with a quarter-moon-shaped brim at the front

*machi-bori*: "town carving"; sword fittings characterized by a more creative and unrestrained manner than the *ie-bori* ("house carving") style

*maedate*: crest on the front of a helmet, held in a bracket called the *kuwagata-dai* or *tsuno-moto* ("antler socket")

*mae-tateage*: short plates or rows of scales forming the upper section of a *dō*

*maewa*: pommel, or front section of a saddle

*maki-e*: lacquerwork, often found on sword mountings, that incorporates gold and silver dust as well as *kanagai*

*masame-hada*: straight grain pattern in the steel texture of a blade

*mei*: signature, date, or other inscriptions chiseled, carved, inlaid, or painted on the tang

*mekugi*: peg that fits through a hole in the sword hilt and into a corresponding hole in the tang to secure the hilt to the tang; most often made of bamboo but sometimes also a metal pin or rivet

*mekugi-ana*: hole in the tang of a sword blade into which the *mekugi* fits

*mempō*: half-mask covering the face below the level of the eyes, frequently with a removable nose piece

*mengu*: broad term for various types of armored face masks

*menuki*: pair of ornamental fittings attached on either side of the sword hilt

*midare-ba*: irregular patterns in the cutting section of the *hamon*

*midare-komi boshi*: irregular temper line on the point of a blade

*midare-utsuri*: "misty" reflective area resembling the irregular temper pattern (*midare-ba*) to which it runs parallel

*migaki-ji*: polished, smooth surface of a sword fitting

*mihaba*: midpoint width of a blade

*mimi*: rim of a sword guard

*mimi-kaki*: ear scraper; the curved finial at the top of a *kōgai*

*mitokoromono*: set of three matching fittings, comprising the *kozuka*, *kōgai*, and a pair of *menuki*

*mitsuba-aoe*: triple hollyhock *mon* of the Tokugawa family

*mitsu-gashira*: the point of the blade where the *ko-shinogi*, *shinogi*, and *yokote* meet

*mojishi-gawa*: leather with dyed motifs of *shishi* (lions) and water plants, used as a covering for certain parts of armor

*mokko mon*: quatrefoil *mon*

*mokume-hada*: burl grain pattern in the steel surface texture of a blade

*momonari-kabuto*: helmet in which the bowl was constructed by joining four iron plates, two on each side, into a "peach" shape

*mon*: insignia or badge of an individual, family, or clan

*monouchi*: first quarter of the cutting edge, with which most cuts are made

*moto*: base of the cutting edge, above the tang

*muna-ita*: upper front portion of the *dō*, to which the shoulder straps are fastened

*muna-ito*: fastenings of the shoulder straps that join the front and back of the *dō*

*mune*: back edge of the blade, opposite the cutting edge

*mune machi*: step at the base of the back edge of the blade at the beginning of the tang

*nagakawa*: side sections of a *dō*

*nagare hada*: "streamlike" steel surface pattern on a sword blade

*nagasa* (*hachō*): imaginary straight line between the point and the *mune machi*, measured to determine the length of the blade (excluding the tang)

*naginata*: staff weapon with a short, slightly curved single-edged blade

*nakago*: tang; the unsharpened base of the blade that fits into the hilt

*nakago-hitsu*: aperture in the center of a *tsuba* through which the tang passes

*nakago-jiri*: shape of the tip of the tang

*nanako-ji*: punched surface frequently found on sword fittings, often said to resemble fish roe; regular pattern of dots made with a round punch called a *nanako-tagane*, which has a hollow recess in the tip to produce the effect of raised dots

*nanatokoromono*: set of seven sword fittings, comprising a *kozuka*, *kōgai*, *menuki*, *fuchigashira*, *kurigata*, *kaeri-zuno*, and *kojiri*

*nanban*: "southern barbarians"; general term for foreigners or foreign style

*nanban-dō*: European cuirass adapted for use on a Japanese armor, or one made in a European style

*nanban-kabuto*: European helmet adapted for use on a Japanese armor, or one made in a European style

*nanban-tetsu*: imported iron

*nashiji*: type of gold-flecked lacquer, said to resemble "pearskin," made of layers of clear lacquer dusted with gold

*nie*: bright crystals of steel in the *hamon* large enough to be visible without magnification

*nijū-ba*: double-lined *hamon*

*nimai-dō*: two-piece cuirass with the front and back halves joined at the sides

*ni-no-ashi*: rear suspension fitting on a *tachi* mounting

*nioi*: fine steel crystals that are not visible to the naked eye and that give a misty appearance to the *jihada*

*nioi-guchi*: border area between the *ji* and *ha*

*nioi odoshi*: style of armor lacing with a darker top and lighter lower border

*nodowa*: throat protection tied around the neck

*nomi-guchi*: mounting in which the base of the hilt is overlapped by the mouth of the scabbard

*notare*: wavy curves or undulations in the *hamon*

*nunome-zōgan*: "textile" inlay, similar to damascening, in which gold or silver sheet or wire is hammered or burnished into fine grooves or cross-hatching cut into a metal ground

*nuri utsubo*: lacquered quiver

*obi-tori*: fittings for the sash straps on a *tachi* scabbard

*ō-chōji midare*: large clove-shaped waves in the *hamon*

*ōdachi*: "great" or large *tachi*

*odoshi*: armor lacing

*odoshi-ito*: armor lacing that joins the rows of *sane-ita*

*ō-itame*: large wood grain pattern in the steel surface of the blade

*ō-kissaki*: larger than usual point area of a blade

*ō-midare*: large irregular patterns in the *hamon*

*omote*: obverse or front; when referring to a blade it means the side that faces out when the sword is worn

*ō-notare*: large wavy curves or undulations in the *hamon*

*ō-seppa*: large spacers or washers on either side of the *tsuba*

*oshitsuke-no-ita*: top plate of the back of the *dō* from which the shoulder straps extend

*ō-sode*: large shoulder guards

*ō-sujikai-yasuri*: file marks in the tang that slant steeply to the right

*ō-suriage*: shortened blade that has had all of its original tang and inscription removed

*ō-yoroi*: "great" *yoroi*; referred to as such because *yoroi* armors tended to be larger than *haramaki* and *dō-maru* armors

*raden*: mother-of-pearl; mother-of-pearl inlay in lacquer

*riken*: Buddhist symbol in the form of a double-edged sword, often used as a *maedate*

*sageo*: cord passed through the *kurigata* and used to tie the *katana* in place

*saihai*: type of commander's baton used for signaling troops and as a sign of rank

*saka-chōji*: *hamon* pattern with oblique *chōji* slanting toward the tang

*saka-ita*: "reverse plate"; plates of armor that overlap top to bottom, in reverse of the usual pattern of overlapping from the bottom up

*saki*: top of the cutting edge

*same*: sharkskin, but used to refer to both rayskin and sharkskin coverings on sword grips and scabbards

*sane*: scales or lamellae; small leather or iron plates from which armor is constructed

*sane-ita*: rigid strips built up of *sane* made of iron, leather, or both

*sankaku-yari*: *yari* with a blade that is triangular in cross section

*sankozuka-ken*: symbolic straight sword with a three-pronged *vajra* hilt

*sanmaibari*: helmet bowl constructed of three plates, one in the center and one on either side

*sanmai-gitae*: method of making *tsuba* in which a sheet of low-quality iron is sandwiched between two sheets of higher-quality iron

*sao*: stem; the smooth elongated portion of a *kōgai*

*sarude*: metal loop that passes through a lateral hole in the pommel cap of a *tachi*

*sasaho-yari*: variation of a *sugu-yari* (straight *yari*) with a blade reminiscent of a bamboo leaf

*sashimono*: small banner or personal flag attached to a bamboo rod and mounted on the back of the *dō*; often decorated with *mon* of the bearer or his lord

*sawaguri*: form of wild chestnut wood used to make the side bars of saddles

*saya*: scabbard or sheath

*sayaguchi*: mouth or opening at the top of the scabbard

*sayamaki no tachi*: Nanbokuchō-period *tachi* mounting with a leather-wrapped scabbard

*seme-gane*: metal ring or band around the lower portion of a *tachi* scabbard

*sendan-no-ita*: articulated plate at the proper right of the upper breast of a *yoroi* *shakudō*: alloy made of copper with an addition of 1 to 6 percent gold that patinates to a dark bluish black

*shibahiki*: metal fitting along the edge of the scabbard at the *ishizuki* (chape)

*shibori*: method of tie-dyeing

*shibuichi*: alloy, usually made of 3 parts copper to 1 part silver, that is dark gray in color; also called *rōgin*

*shigeto no yumi*: rattan-bound bow

*shiho jiro*: three-pronged metal appliqué, or *shinodare* (arrow shapes), riveted to a helmet bowl

*shii-nari*: "sweet acorn"; helmet that is rounded or conical in form

*shikaeshi mono*: armors made from reused parts in the 16th and 17th centuries when the demand for new armor surpassed the supply

*shikoro*: neck guard attached to a helmet bowl

*shinodare*: arrow shapes; a type of decoration riveted to a helmet bowl

*shinogi*: ridge along the length of a blade between the edge and the back

*shinogi-ji*: blade surface between the ridge and the back edge

*shinogi-zukuri*: blade with a longitudinal ridge (*shinogi*) and a transverse ridge (*yotoke*) at the point; typical on Japanese swords

*shino-suneate*: shin defenses with vertical slats or ribs of lacquered iron

*shintō*: "new sword"; term for swords made from late 16th to late 18th century

*shiode*: fittings on a saddle for the attachment of straps

*shippō*: cloisonné

*shira-saya*: plain wooden sheath or scabbard used to store and protect a sword blade when not mounted

*shirome*: pewterlike alloy of antimony containing some arsenic; used for making sword fittings

*shishiai-bori*: combination of outline engraving and low-relief carving in metal

*shitanaga*: type of stirrups (*abumi*) with long footrests

*shita-toji*: thin leather cords laced through the lower sets of holes on *sane* that link them into rows

*shizuwa*: cantle, or the rear part of a saddle

*shokakutsuki-kabuto*: Kofun-period helmet with a sharp projection at the front resembling the prow of a ship

*sode*: shoulder guards

*sodegata*: sleeve-shaped rear sight on the barrel of a matchlock gun

*some-kawa*: dyed or stenciled doeskin used to cover or line parts of armor

*sori*: blade curvature; distance between the *mune* and *nagasa*

*soya*: military arrows with thin pointed arrowheads and three feathers

*suemon-zōgan*: appliqué that is inset or recessed into the surrounding ground

*sugake odoshi*: style of armor lacing in which the rows of plates are joined by parallel pairs of laces spaced widely apart

*suguha*, *suguha hamon*: straight tempering pattern

*sugu-yari*: form of straight-bladed *yari*

*suhama gata*: recessed or undercut portion on the pommel of a saddle

*suji*: ridges, in reference to the lengthwise ridges along the exposed edges of the plates of a helmet; the most prominent feature of the *suji-kabuto*

*suji-bachi*: helmet bowl of a *suji-kabuto*

*suji-kabuto*: ridged helmet introduced during the Nanbokuchō and Muromachi periods for use with *haramaki* and *dō-maru* armors as well as with *ō-yoroi*

*sukashi*: technique for decorating iron *tsuba* in which ground is removed and the design is formed by the portions of iron that remain; *tsuba* with pierced decoration

*sunagashi*: grain formations in the *hamon* resembling lines of sand or frayed silk

*sune-ate*: armor covering the shins

*suriage*: blade that has been shortened at the tang but whose original inscription remains

*suriwari*: foresight on the barrel of a matchlock gun comprising a rectangular block with a single groove cut into it along the line of sight

*suso*: lower border or edge

*susodori odoshi*: lacing style for *sode* in which the lower border is in a different color from the rest

*tachi*: slung sword, referring to a sword worn with the cutting edge facing down

*tachi-mei*: signature that is on the obverse of the tang when the blade is worn *tachi*-style

*taka-bori*: high relief; raised designs

*takamaki-e*: high-relief lacquer

*takaniku-bori*: high-relief sculpture

*tameshi-giri*: cutting test; results of a cutting test inscribed on the tang of a blade

*tankō*: Kofun-period plate armor

*tantō*: dagger or blade less than 30 cm long

*tataki-nuri*: surface treatment made by stippling lacquer to create an uneven or pebbled texture; mottled lacquer

*tate-age*: upper half of a *dō*, formed by short plates or rows of scales

*tegata*: indentations on either side of a saddle pommel near the top

*tehen*: hole at the crown of the helmet bowl

*tekkō*: hand guard that is part of the *kote*

*tekkotsū*: "iron bones"; purposely rough surface texture on iron *tsuba*

*tentsuki*: "heaven piercing"; tall form of helmet crest

*teppō*: matchlock gun; also called *hinawa-ju*

*tobi-yaki*: rounded isolated areas of martensitic steel present in the *ji* and separated from the main *hamon*

*togari*: pointed *gunome*; compact pointed waves or zigzag lines in the *hamon*

*togari-ba*: pointed wave patterns in the *hamon*

*togidashi*: polished lacquer

*tokan-nari kabuto*: helmet in the style of a Chinese Tang-dynasty crown

*tōran-ba*: "wild" or "stormy" curving wave pattern in the *hamon*

*tōsei gusoku*: "equipment of the times"; complete armor (*gusoku*) developed by the late Muromachi period

*tosho tsuba*: *tsuba* made by a swordsmith

*tsuba*: sword guard

*tsuchime-ji*: metal ground that is hammered smooth but left uneven and finely dented; technique used on *tsuba*

*tsujigahana*: resist-dyeing technique in which silk is painted, stitched, knotted, dipped in dye baths, and then rinsed repeatedly

*tsuka*: hilt of a sword or dagger mounting, including the grip and all of the fittings above the *tsuba*

*tsuka-gashira*: pommel cap at the end of the hilt, commonly known as the *kashira*

*tsukamaki*: art of wrapping the sword grip (*tsuka*), usually with silk braid

*tsumadori odoshi*: "edge-gathered lacing"; multicolored triangular pattern of lacing at the edges of *sode* and *kusazuri*

*tsumasaki*: downward-sloping legs of the pommel and cantle of a saddle

*tsuno-moto*: "antler socket"; bracket on the front of a helmet that holds the *maedate*; also called the *kuwagata-dai*

*tsurubashiri*: "bowstring path"; leather facing that covers the front of the *dō*

*ubu*: term referring to a sword that retains its original full length; blade with an intact tang that has not been shortened for later reuse

*uchigatana-goshirae*: mounting for a sword with a cutting edge over 60 cm long, made to be worn through a waist sash with the cutting edge upward; the scabbard has a *kurigata* and a *sageo*

*uchinoke*: fine linear formations of *nie* in curving lines extending from the *hamon* toward the *ji*

*uchiwa*: paddle-like fan; type of commander's baton and part of the *jineigu*

*uchi-zori*: curvature of a *tantō* that decreases near the point, with the back edge straight, nearly straight, or with a slight reverse curve

*ukibori*: type of low-relief carving technique used on sword fittings

*umajirushi*: "horse sign"; standard intended to be visible from a distance and to show the position of a field commander during battle

*umi*: "sea"; thinner top section of the pommel of a saddle

*ura*: reverse or opposite side of swords and *tsuba*

*uragawara*: part of the fittings of an *aikuchi-tantō-goshirae*

*ushiro-date*: rear crest of a helmet

*ushiro-tateage*: short plate or row of scales on the upper part of the back of the *dō*

*usuniku-bori*: low relief; decorative technique used on sword fittings in which motifs are only slightly raised above the ground surface

*usuniku-zōgan*: slightly raised inlay

*utsubo*: quiver worn horizontally at the right hip

*utsuri*: reflective, "misty" band that parallels the *hamon* along the edge

*uttori iro-e*: decorative technique whereby the components of a design are covered in thin gold sheet that is then pressed down around the base of each motif

*waidate*: separate side piece of a *yoroi* that protects the wearer's right side

*wakidate*: side crests of a helmet

*waki-ita*: leather-covered or lacquered iron plates at the underarms on either side of a *dō*

*wakizashi*: short sword with a blade between 30 and 60 cm long; from the Muromachi period, usually worn by samurai in tandem with a *katana*

*watagami*: shoulder straps on a *dō*

*watari-maki*: cord wrapping over a scabbard between the mouth and the end of the second suspension fitting

*waza-mono*: categorization of swords that cut well

*yagenbori*: engraving technique that employs triangular-section cuts; used to decorate blades

*yaki-ire*: special heat treatment of blades, including the quenching

*yaki-otoshi*: blade on which the *hamon* begins a small distance above the *ha-machi*

*yakogai*: marine species of snail from which the mother-of-pearl inlay used in lacquer was obtained

*yamagane*: copper alloy mixed with *shirome*; copper that includes natural impurities such as antimony and other elements as a result of primitive refining techniques; also called *nigurome*

*yari*: thrusting and cutting spear

*yasuri-me*: file marks on the tang

*yazutsu*: quiver designed to be worn vertically on the right hip

*yō*: small isolated spots within the *hamon* toward the cutting edge

*yodarekake*: throat defense attached to the bottom edge of a face mask

*yokote*: horizontal ridge between the point section and the rest of the blade

*yoroi*: cavalry armor worn by samurai comprising in its basic form a *kabuto*, *dō* with *kusazuri*, and *sode*; flourished during the Heian and Kamakura periods, gradually went out of fashion in the Nanbokuchō period, and was revived in the Edo period

*yoroidoshi*: "armor-piercer"; type of *tantō*

*yotokoromono*: set of sword fittings comprising a *kozuka*, *kōgai*, *menuki*, and *fuchigashira*

*yugake*: archer's glove

*zōgan*: inlay

*zudate*: term that refers to a tall, upright helmet crest

*zunari*: "head-shaped" helmet bowl made of three iron plates, one at the center and one on either side

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